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**A WORLD ELSEWHERE  
ART COLONIES IN CALIFORNIA AND NEW MEXICO, 1900-1940**

Essen, Jennifer Michelle

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**A WORLD ELSEWHERE:**  
**ART COLONIES IN CALIFORNIA AND NEW MEXICO,**  
**1900-1940**

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**PhD American Studies**

**King's College London**

**October 2016**

*For myself*

*(after Georgia O'Keeffe)*

## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses the distinct form of art colony that flourished in Carmel, California and Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico, in the opening decades of the twentieth century. The diversity of people, experience and colony-produced art has largely discouraged analysis of western colonies as a group. My argument in this thesis is that new interpretive frameworks are needed to understand the defining and shared qualities of these colonies. Identifying patterns in seemingly disparate practices reveals the kind of colony this was, its features, its appeal and its influence on the artistic work of participants.

I begin by charting the art colony tradition as it unfolded in the US and tracing the western art colony's development out of this established model. Despite shared styles of sociality and retreat from urban America, the western art colony differed from its predecessors in its greater remoteness, particular style of community and opportunities for contact with Native and Spanish-speaking populations. In this they build on an established rhetoric of romantic otherness in these regions.

Successive chapters explicate my definition of these colonies as networks of temporary association. Chapter Two explores the ways in which the colony's community balanced a sense of belonging with opportunities for multi-directional movements, allowing art-colonists to control their engagement with the colony milieu. In Chapter Three I focus on Anglo-American art-colonists' interactions with Native and Spanish-speaking peoples, specifically their formally experimental but problematic attempts to comprehend cultural difference. Chapter Four moves from intercultural to interpersonal interactions by exploring how these art colonies generated an arena for negotiating the intersections between gender and artistic autonomy.

As improvisatory spaces these art colonies accommodated and even thrived on diversity and mutability. This thesis recovers western art colonies as important examples of collaborative artistic endeavour.

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And lastly, I would like to thank the kind man who works in the post office in Embudo, New Mexico. Without him, I may still be stranded in the desert.



## Introduction

In February 2014, my car broke down in the New Mexican desert. As I sat waiting for breakdown assistance to reach me on a remote canyon road, I gazed up at the beautiful mesa whose tumbling rocks had punctured my tyre. This recalled another breakdown in New Mexico, another broken wheel and another experience of being stranded in the desert. In 1898 painters Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Geer Phillips were travelling through New Mexico when their horse-drawn wagon broke its wheel on the outskirts of Taos.<sup>1</sup> This was, ultimately, a fortuitous accident. Enamoured with what they saw as the town's picturesque charm, they stayed to establish the Taos Society of Artists, a cooperative of painters who went on to form an art colony in Taos to promote paintings produced there.<sup>2</sup> My journey to Taos seemed fraught and arduous, but it paled in comparison to that of Blumenschein and Phillips, or to salon hostess Mabel Dodge Luhan's night time expedition through the desert in a car with no headlights, a journey described by D. H. Lawrence in 'The Wilful Woman' as a relentless succession of topographical challenges:

A breathless scramble in deep cañons over what look like simple landslides and precipices, the car at an angle of forty-five degrees above a green rocky river, banging itself to bits against boulders, surging through the river [...] with the devil's own scramble up a rocky bank on the other side.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Julie Schimmel and Robert Rankin White, *Bert Geer Phillips and the Taos Art Colony* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Rankin White, *The Taos Society of Artists* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'The Wilful Woman', in *D. H. Lawrence and New Mexico*, ed. by Keith Sagar (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1982), pp. 6-9 (p. 7). At this time her full name was Mabel Dodge Sterne. It became Mabel Dodge Luhan when she divorced her third husband Maurice Sterne and married Tony Lujan, a Taos Native American. Born to a wealthy family in Buffalo, New York, as Mabel Ganson, Luhan's first husband was Karl Evans, with whom she had a son before he died in a hunting accident after just two years of marriage. She lived in Florence for seven years with her second husband, architect Edwin Dodge. Here, at the lavish Villa Curonia, Luhan entertained local artists as well as visiting American intellectuals, establishing herself as a gifted salon hostess. This talent she honed when she moved back to New York, now becoming estranged from her second husband. Luhan's weekly salon at 23 Fifth Avenue in Greenwich Village became the legendary haunt of the era's movers and shakers and an epicentre for its progressive art and politics. But it was an entreaty from her third husband, painter Maurice Sterne, that prompted Luhan's move to her final home and final husband in New Mexico. For reference purposes I will refer to her as Luhan, since this was the name by which she was predominantly known at the Taos art colony. See Lois Palken Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas: The Mabel Dodge Luhan House and the American Counterculture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

The landscape is harsh and intimidating; it is an environment where a 'scramble' is the pinnacle of successful travel. Luhan's survival of such a journey is consequently told with a sense of tremendous accomplishment while Lawrence's description also conveys a sense that reaching this place is worth the struggle. Questions about these journeys to distant places have formed one of the starting points of this thesis. The artists who made these journeys were not undertaking leisurely train rides to well-known holiday spots or following established tourist circuits.<sup>4</sup> Art colonies that flourished in California and New Mexico were far removed from major American cities and difficult to access from outside the regions. The question of what it was about these regions that prompted so many writers, artists and intellectuals to make these challenging trips, as well as the frequent movements many colonists made once in the region, are the central investigation of this thesis. If getting to these places was so challenging, why, then, did they make this extraordinary effort, and in many cases do so over and over again?

Real life movements and patterns of movement were reflected in colonists' imaginative representation of journeys to and fro. Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*, for example, explores this through emphasizing the difference between the southwest and the urban environment, replicating actual journeys made by colonists in the movements imagined in the novel.<sup>5</sup> Cather's narrative concerns a history professor, Godfrey St Peter, who uses the journals of his former student, Tom Outland, to escape city life vicariously. 'Tom Outland's Story' is placed between two sections set in the city and recounts Outland's travels in the southwest. Outland's sojourn in New Mexico and his discovery of fictionalized Blue Mesa cliff dwellings stands at the centre of the

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<sup>4</sup> I employ the term 'artists' throughout this thesis to refer to a range of artistic occupations, including (but not limited to) painters, novelists, poets and photographers.

<sup>5</sup> During the first decades of the twentieth century Cather made numerous trips to the southwest and spent two consecutive summers at the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies. Her earliest travels to the southwest were to visit her brother in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 1912 and 1914. In 1915 she visited Mesa Verde, Colorado, which became fictionalized as Cliff City in *The Professor's House*. Cather's first visit to New Mexico came in 1916 when she visited Taos, before the two long summers in the state in 1925 and 1926 which included periods in both Taos and Santa Fe amongst other southwestern destinations. Travelling from her New York home Cather spent these summers at the art colonies finalizing drafts of *The Professor's House* and her subsequent novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, both works inspired by the writer's earlier trips to the southwest. Hermione Lee, *Willa Cather: A Life Saved Up* (London: Virago, 1989); Harold Bloom, *Willa Cather's Gift of Sympathy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962).

narrative: the story is a southwestern 'turquoise' set in the 'dull silver' of Chicago, as Cather suggests in the epigraph.<sup>6</sup> This is an intriguing structure. The self-contained narrative of 'Tom Outland's Story' might easily have stood alone as a short story, yet instead Cather transports her readers imaginatively from the city to the southwest and back again. As she explained later, she wanted to 'open the square window [in St Peter's study] and let in the fresh air that blew off the Blue Mesa'.<sup>7</sup> Cather's descriptions of the southwest are vibrant and compelling, and they highlight the draw of the southwest for urbanites not just for its own sake, but also as a dramatic departure from urban experience:

When I pulled out on top of the mesa, the rays of sunlight fell slantingly through the little twisted *piñons*, – the light was all in between them, as red as a daylight fire, they fairly swam in it. Once again I had that glorious feeling that I've never had anywhere else, the feeling of being *on the mesa*, in a world above the world. And the air, my God, what air! – Soft, tingling, gold, hot with an edge of chill on it, full of the smell of *piñons* – it was like breathing the sun, breathing the colour of the sky.<sup>8</sup>

Cather's synaesthetic description suggests that the southwest affords something entirely unique in terms of intensified sensual engagement and interaction with one's surroundings. Her sensuous impression of the region also gives a sense of heightened perspective, symbolically and literally, from a stance 'above the world'. Through the character of Outland, whose name introduces her meaning, Cather implies that presence in the southwest induces an intense experience that 'comes to you as a sort of message' and 'makes you feel differently about the ground you walk over every

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<sup>6</sup> Willa Cather, *The Professor's House* (New York: Knopf, 1925; repr. London: Virago, 1981), title page. All subsequent references are to this edition. The Native American settlement discovered by Outland and his companion Roddy are geographically depicted within what would become New Mexican territory but its real-life inspiration was Mesa Verde, Colorado; Geneva M. Gano, 'Outland Out There: Cather's Cosmopolitan West', in *Violence, The Arts, and Willa Cather*, ed. by Joseph R. Urgo and Merrill Maguire Skaggs (Madison, ND: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), pp. 100-08 (p. 106).

<sup>7</sup> Willa Cather, 'On Writing *The Professor's House*', in *Willa Cather on Writing: Critical Studies on Writing as an Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 30-42 (pp. 31-2).

<sup>8</sup> Cather, *The Professor's House*, p. 240.

day’.<sup>9</sup> The sense of the absolute distinction between this and other spaces, especially an urban environment, suggests that the southwest accommodates experiences that are not available elsewhere.

Between 1900 and 1940 many American and European artists, writers and intellectuals shared Cather’s attraction to an area incorporating rural California and the desert of northern New Mexico.<sup>10</sup> They came via the artistic salons of New York, San Francisco, Florence and Paris. Some set up home and stayed permanently in these areas, finding something distinctive and exciting in these places and creating, in effect, permanent colonies. The word ‘colony’, after all, conjures up images of settlers: cohesive groups of people banding together, putting down roots in a place, and establishing settlements through the expansion of families. Many artists and writers congregated around the celebrated poet George Sterling after he settled in the picturesque Californian coastal village of Carmel-by-the-Sea in 1905.<sup>11</sup> In Taos, many initially came at the invitation of Luhan, who had moved to New Mexico after previously holding salons for the intelligentsia in her Florence and New York homes.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in Santa Fe, poet and magazine editor Alice Corbin acted as a focus for visiting artists and writers after she moved to New Mexico in 1916 with her husband, painter William Penhallow Henderson.<sup>13</sup> Those who settled permanently often formed the nucleus of these groups, as other artists would be drawn to visit either by invitation or through pre-existing alliances.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> All three of these places maintained their status as artistic centres beyond this period. My choice of periodization is, however, predicated on the group of artists who created a network of connections between these three places by either movement or affiliation. This period saw artists exhibit specific patterns of behaviour which I outline as the basis of definition of this specific form of settlement, experiences borne of contemporary social anxieties about community, culture and gender in the early decades of the twentieth century.

<sup>11</sup> Borne to a wealthy family in Sag Harbour, New York, Sterling worked at his uncle’s San Francisco real estate office and married the office’s stenographer, Carrie Rand, while at the same time honing his talents for poetry and socializing which made him a central personality of the Bay Area’s artistic crowd. It was through this crowd that Sterling met Jack London. He lived in Carmel between 1905 and 1914, the zenith years of the art colony. Thomas E. Benediktsson, *George Sterling* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Luhan lived in Florence between 1905 and 1912 before returning to New York and establishing a successful weekly salon at 23 Fifth Avenue; she moved to Taos in 1916. Flannery Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos: Primitivism and Place at Mabel Dodge Luhan’s* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Corbin arrived in Santa Fe as the influential and well-connected co-editor of *Poetry* magazine in Chicago, which she had edited since its launch in 1912. She married William Penhallow Henderson and had a daughter, also called Alice, before becoming ill with tuberculosis. She was originally urged to head to the southwest to

Settlement for a sustained period, however, was, as I have said, not characteristic of the temporary and sometimes irregular experiences of these colonies and shifts in colonists' engagement with them. Many artists mirrored Cather's movements, taking sporadic trips to these art colonies from New York, San Francisco, or, further afield, from Europe. Those travelling between American cities and these colonies periodically include painter Georgia O'Keeffe, who spent increasing amounts of time in Taos before moving from New York to New Mexico permanently in 1940.<sup>14</sup> Ethnologist and novelist Oliver La Farge took numerous trips to Santa Fe and Taos to gather scientific data and draw artistic inspiration for both his anthropological reports and award-winning fiction.<sup>15</sup> Novelist Jack London, meanwhile, often visited his good friend Sterling in Carmel, enjoying the camaraderie with other artists as well as the colony's rugged natural landscape.<sup>16</sup> While these figures, along with many others, became regular visitors to particular colonies, travelling between colonies in the region was also common. The writer Mary Austin, for example, was central in the establishment of the art colony in Carmel but later relocated to Santa Fe, while photographer Ansel Adams spent time in Taos before setting up home in Carmel.<sup>17</sup> The multiplicity and diversity of these

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recuperate at Sunmount sanatorium. She arrived in March 1916 and moved to a house in Santa Fe the following year. She is referred to in the literature as both Alice Corbin and Alice Corbin Henderson, but I will refer to her as Corbin in order to differentiate from reference to her husband, William Penhallow Henderson. I also refer to them collectively as Corbin-Henderson, as in, for instance, the Corbin-Henderson home in Santa Fe. Lynn Cline, *Literary Pilgrims: The Santa Fe and Taos Writers' Colonies, 1917-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), pp. 21-23; Paul Weideman, 'William Penhallow Henderson: Artist, Builder, Furniture-Maker', *Historic Santa Fe Foundation Bulletin*, 31 (2007), 1-16 (p. 4).

<sup>14</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe was an established artist in New York when she first came to New Mexico in 1929 to stay with Luhan. She went on to divide her time equally between New York and New Mexico, making annual visits to Taos until she bought a ranch in nearby Abiquiu in 1940. Her distinctive paintings produced in the region took indigenous architecture, Hispanic Catholic crosses and the desert landscape as subjects. Roxana Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Oliver La Farge visited the southwest on ethnographic research trips both as a Harvard anthropology student and later as a professional ethnologist. His numerous trips through the southwest during the 1920s and 1930s included time spent at both the Santa Fe and Taos colonies. He settled permanently in Santa Fe in 1940. D'Arcy McNickle, *Indian Man: A Life of Oliver La Farge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Jack London travelled much of the world by land and by sea, forging his reputation with tales of the far north which drew on his experience in the Klondike Gold Rush. His close relationship with Sterling led him to visit Carmel on two occasions in 1906 and 1910 yet he is credited as a central personality in the colony's development. Franklin Walker, *The Seacoast of Bohemia* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1966).

<sup>17</sup> Austin (sometimes referred to as Mary Hunter Austin) moved to Carmel in 1905 and had a home built in the style of a Native American 'wickiup'. She left Carmel to see Europe in 1908, returning to Carmel for visits in later years but never again living there. She moved permanently to Santa Fe in 1924 after a decade of visits. Ansel Adams had established his reputation with a series of impressive shots of Yosemite National Park and would go on to forge a lasting career with his large-scale American landscapes. He stayed with Luhan in Taos in

visits and encounters complicate traditional connotations of a 'colony' and invites explorations of terminology.

These diverse physical movements were undertaken by an equally diverse category of people. Art-colonists are not an easily identifiable type, although all were white and middle-class. (Their shared attitudes are the subject of Chapter Three.) They came from across Europe and America. Some were established in their careers while others were still just starting out. They were painters, novelists, sculptors, poets, photographers, dancers, psychologists, social reformers, and magazine editors. Indeed, even their designation as 'art-colonist' requires qualification. Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos were populated with diverse indigenous groups, visiting artists and often their spouses and families. Art-colonists were individuals seeking re-invigoration of their artistic work through an engagement with the region. At the same time, though, they were seeking the experience of these artistic milieux. As *artists* they drew attention to the specificity of the region and the colony milieu through their work, and as *colonists* they formed social and professional bonds that created the network of connections underpinning the project of the art colony. This network included all the visitors and settlers who interacted with artists, or who engaged with the region's natural and cultural environments and produced artistic interpretations of the art colony landscape: all these individuals I define as art-colonists.<sup>18</sup>

In this thesis I acknowledge the diversity of the people, places, movements and interactions which characterize these colonies. Indeed, theorizing this diversity is my central concern. It is precisely their sense of collection and juxtaposition of miscellaneous participants that makes the colonies so intriguing. I recognise, as earlier critics have, that this makes it hard to generalize across different colonies and to draw out commonalities. However, where many critics have responded to

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1929 and again in 1930 during which time he produced the photographs for the book *Taos Pueblo*. Carmel became his permanent home in 1962, outside of the periodization of this thesis but having maintained its distinctly artistic milieu. Esther Lanigan Stineman, *Mary Austin: Song of a Maverick* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Krista West, *Ansel Adams* (New York: Chelsea House, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> To this end, some artists' and writers' spouses are not referred to as art-colonists unless they were actively involved in the colony and in the production of art, such as Corbin and Henderson.

this obstacle by limiting their discussions to single narratives (one location or one person or one artistic mode), I make the argument that particular practices of movement and styles of engagement define the art colony. By collating the multiple 'stories' of these places in terms of movement and engagement, I seek to draw attention to new areas for which art colonies are significant. What links these varied discussions is a focus on strategies for, and experiences of, connectedness: between artists, between cultures, and between men and women. Different chapters of this thesis elucidate how the experiences of participants in the life of these colonies and the work influenced by their time in these places reflect contemporary concerns about socially-constructed concepts of community, culture and marriage. These individuals grappled with ideas about the differences between people and experimented with how to share space with others. But I begin by outlining the parameters of my study in terms of my generic focus and choices about the figures discussed, my conceptualization of these three colonies as a collective entity, and the geographic and historical contexts of the art colonies that flourished in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos. By justifying my inclination towards literary figures and influential personalities (although visual art and artists are discussed at various points throughout the thesis), tackling similarities and differences between the regions hosting the Californian and New Mexican art colonies, and tracing the years preceding the establishment of these art colonies in places already recognised for their romantic appeal and prior rhetoric of 'enchantment', these preliminary considerations provide a grounding to subsequent discussions of specific patterns of behaviour and shared practices exhibited at these three vibrant artistic sites. Biographical information about art-colonists is raised where it is illuminating and useful to the discussion but is avoided where this may distract from the thrust of my arguments. Footnotes with additional biographical details on all figures are provided throughout the thesis.

Tracing interactions between individuals and other colonists, non-Anglo peoples, and spouses reveals a variety of tactics employed to mediate and manage what Santa Fe colonist Harvey Fergusson called 'human contact'.<sup>19</sup> These artists and writers were exploring how much they wanted

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<sup>19</sup> Diary, 6 September 1924, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

to be alone or in a partnership or amongst peers or amongst a wholly different group of people. This was inherently connected to their idiosyncratic needs as artists (what were the ideal conditions for producing art?) but it was also about the most satisfying way to live. In these art colonies, participants who were disillusioned with American urban culture and seeking the conditions conducive to artistic production inhabited an environment where they could try out different ways of living, utilizing 'the most individuating place in the world' where there is 'no standardization' and 'people do not live according to a single pattern', as Taos doyenne Luhan articulated it.<sup>20</sup> In Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos, creative and intellectual individuals played around with what they perceived to be culturally-ingrained patterns of behaviour: what it means to be part of a community, how one understands and communicates cultural difference, and how gender roles inform marital dynamics.

As a thesis about the interactions between people, my investigations have naturally been led by those who interacted the most. Biographies, diaries, autobiographies, essays and correspondence all present a picture of a core group of colonists at each colony. These art-colonists exhibited the artistic, social and cultural patterns of behaviour which I have argued define these places as a specific form of settlement and, notably, these key figures are mainly writers of some kind. They are the figures who appear to have involved themselves most thoroughly in colony life, come together to form group activities or events, and whose experiences are the most illuminating in terms of the patterns I trace throughout the thesis. It is the presence of such patterns that ground my conceptualization of these three distinct art colonies as a collective entity.

I have favoured written over visual art in this thesis in order to fully explore these patterns of behaviour and thus foreground the organization of these artistic hubs. Carmel was a distinctly literary milieu, distinguishable from nearby Monterey and its reputation as a painters' 'mecca'.<sup>21</sup> Carmel and Monterey offered similar attractions in terms of natural landscape and distance from urban centres, yet Monterey became a visual arts hub while mostly writers congregated at Carmel.

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<sup>20</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, 'Paso Por Aqui', *New Mexico Quarterly*, 21 (1941), pp. 137-46 (p. 141).

<sup>21</sup> Leonore Kothe, 'In Old Monterey', *Overland Monthly* 57 (1911), pp. 631-32 (p. 631).



This is due, in part, to the central role played by Sterling. It was Sterling's move to Carmel that sparked the development of the art colony, and it was his artistic acquaintances which bolstered the colony's new visitors and residents. These were not all writers but were, in fact, a diverse range of creative and intellectual personalities, but it stands to reason that a higher proportion were literary figures with whom Sterling shared a professional capacity and artistic marketplace. A similar case can be made for both Santa Fe and Taos. Luhan had gained a reputation as a collector of writers before settling in Taos.<sup>22</sup> This continued when she relocated to New Mexico, seeking to bring a writer to the art colony who could adequately interpret the spirit of Taos while, almost immediately upon arriving in New Mexico, Corbin contacted friends cultivated through the Chicago literary scene and her role as co-editor of *Poetry* magazine. She had been resident at the Sunmount Sanatorium mere weeks when she enticed poet Carl Sandburg to visit to witness the 'sand-combed valley to the west', the 'mesas rising out of it' and the 'snow-capped Sangre de Cristo range'.<sup>23</sup> Again, this is not to say that Santa Fe was solely the domain of writers but, like Carmel, there was a strong literary contingent producing interesting and insightful interpretations of colony locales. By recovering other artistic modes this thesis, together with existing works on visual culture in these places, more accurately presents these places as vibrant hubs of diverse aesthetic persuasions.

This thesis contributes to the field by bridging the gap between histories of the individuals involved, studies of the west and southwest, and understanding of the art colony tradition. As such, a range of material has informed the theoretical underpinnings of this project. New Western History's re-evaluation of colonization and ethnicity have provided a broad context for my exploration. A thesis like this is inherently indebted to works like Patricia Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest* and Richard White's *'It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own'*, principally in their focus on the particular circumstances of the American 'west'. Acknowledging the complexities of the

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<sup>22</sup> Lois Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Pearce, *Alice Corbin Henderson*, p. 13. Sandburg heeded Corbin's letter, visited Santa Fe and gave readings of his poetry at Sunmount. His time in Santa Fe influenced poems such as 'Santa Fe Sketches' and 'Alice Corbin Is Gone'. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 22.

region has been one of the major achievements of the New Western History. Confronting stale images of a 'frontier' space, works like Limerick's and White's have engaged in a debate about how differences of class, gender and ethnicity have played out in the complex and diverse circumstances of a colonized region.

My investigations also engage with a rich field of criticism exploring and analysing cultural geography, particularly with regards to southwestern regionalism and different versions of the art colony. Nina Lübbren's analysis of nineteenth-century European art colonies recovers previously neglected spaces as part of a broader reconceptualization of late-nineteenth-century European art.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, studies of the southwest ground this thesis in the creation of a region through art and imagination. In their respective studies Martin Padget, Leah Dilworth and Audrey Goodman all shed light on the intricacies of mythologization and appropriation through close analysis of various aspects of a centre-periphery relationship between Anglo America and the indigenous populations of the southwest, including the culture that facilitated these processes, the audience who received impressions of the region, and the result of presence in the southwest on an Anglo imperialist mentality.<sup>25</sup>

Subsequent chapters engage with a number of approaches that do not derive from studies of the region but which share a revisionist bent in their reconceptualization of traditional notions. These include Jessica Berman's exploration of non-traditional community in the pages of early-twentieth-century fiction, James Clifford on attempts to reconcile ideas of dwelling and travel, and Vera Norwood and Janice Monk on the characterization of a feminist southwest that provided strong women with a space outside of contemporary societal restrictions.<sup>26</sup> In grounding my evaluation of

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<sup>24</sup> Nina Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe: 1870-1910* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Martin Padget, *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest, 1840-1935* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004); Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); Audrey Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes: The Making of an Anglo Literary Region* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); James Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures', in *Cultural Studies*, ed. by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 96-112; Vera Norwood and Janice Monk,

these art colonies in this range of critical disciplines, I want to extend the forms of analysis brought to bear on these art colonies, foregrounding their form alongside their creative production.

These diverse methodologies are linked with, and augmented by, my own archival research. My work with the archives of these colonies enabled me to establish the daily life and the social routines of these underexplored places, and to avoid some of the generalizations and descriptive limitations of existing art colony scholarship. Since this thesis is an exploration of the ways people interacted with each other, the diaries, correspondence and artistic ephemera contained in these records uncovered little-known figures with fascinating experiences of these art colonies. Many figures whose work and experiences have been neglected in literary and cultural histories have proved illuminating. Certain figures, such as Carmel colonist James Hopper and Santa Fe colonist Raymond Otis, have all but fallen into obscurity, while attention to others, like Santa Fe colonists Fergusson and La Farge, has been restricted to specific aspects of their work.<sup>27</sup> Some figures, of course, have achieved a more recognised place in American letters. Yet the wealth of critical studies of writers like Lawrence, Austin or London have rarely engaged with those aspects of their lives and writing brought to the fore in their engagement with art colonies and discussed in this thesis.

In focusing on these temporary engagements with colonies, drawing attention to particular facets of this type of group, and thinking about how to approach them in methodological terms, I have given limited attention to broader discussions of particular artists and writers and their aesthetic interests, and to aspects of the cultural and artistic life of the period. This approach sheds new light on previously neglected areas of artists' oeuvres (Adams' Taos aesthetic, for instance, is often overlooked in favour of those majestic landscapes of his later career that came to typify his photographic approach) while many works dismissed as artistically unimaginative and aesthetic

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eds, *The Desert is No Lady: Southwestern Landscapes in Women's Writing and Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>27</sup> Fergusson's depiction of the mountain man figure is praised in William T. Pilkington, *Harvey Fergusson* (Boston: Twayne, 1975) and John R. Milton, *The Novel of the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); La Farge's anthropological achievements are recounted in detail in D'Arcy McNickle, *Indian Man* and Robert A. Hecht, *Oliver La Farge and the American Indian: A Biography* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991).

failures are appreciated for what they communicate about the colony environment, their depictions of the experiments being conducted at the colony and the anxieties with which art-colonists were grappling.

### **Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as a collective entity**

The groups in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos represent a specific type of art colony. As I have already suggested, this version of the art colony, this specific kind of group, exists at the intersection of individual movements. As the opening of this introduction made clear, getting there was a highly significant aspect of these art colony experiences. The journey itself was a quintessential experience which linked these people. All of them were 'outsiders' experiencing and depicting these regions. Certainly, these colonies' detachment and relative inaccessibility from urban centres heightened a sense of freedom and escape but, more than that, there is a sense of almost continual movement: at a particular moment, on a particular night in a particular colonist's house, for instance, there are a set of people whose individual movements intersect, if only momentarily, at the nexus which is the western art colony. It is a network of temporary association, providing a sense of affiliation without impeding the artist's desire for autonomy and movement. People moved into and out of the colony milieu, creating networks rooted in mutability and a sense of managed engagement with other people.

Tracing the history of the art colony (as I do in the following chapter) shows that Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos are the only three art colonies to diverge from the ubiquitous model that appeared in the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Furthermore, the ways in which they diverge from the more common model are consistent in all three of these art colonies. These shared practices include (as well as a diversity of participants and less structured patterns of movement into and out of the colony milieu) an interest in non-Anglo cultures and a desire for a different way to live as well as to produce art. Much of this is influenced by their chosen locales in California and New Mexico, as aspects of these regions' natural, ethnic and cultural

contexts appealed to these artists' creative sensibilities (as I shall discuss in the following section). Participants at these three sites were in some ways building on a tradition of artists congregating in out-of-the-way locations and were in some ways reinforcing a prior rhetoric of western and southwestern romanticism. Here, though, they did so in new ways with new aims. The strikingly similar themes explored in their art and literature and the strikingly similar engagement with contemporary issues show these three art colonies engaged a specific kind of collaborative activity. Thus, as well as addressing the heterogeneity of these colonies, I am proposing a synthesized re-evaluation of these places as a specific type of art colony.

Within the distinct histories of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos are discernible shared perspectives and practices which form the basis of my investigations in this thesis. There is an overwhelming propensity of participants articulating a desire for a decisive retreat from modernity and the city. Mabel Dodge Luhan asserts her escape to Taos to remove herself 'from the dislocated world', while her biographer categorises Luhan's home, Los Gallos, as an oasis for the 'spiritual and psychic renewal' of the hostess and her guests.<sup>28</sup> In letters to his mentor, Ambrose Bierce, George Sterling similarly asserted his desire to get away to Carmel to 'escape the dull routines of city life'.<sup>29</sup> As Saxon, Jack London's Anglo-American protagonist in *Valley of the Moon*, his novel thinly fictionalizing the Carmel art colony, articulates:

The sun was good; the wind was good, as was the keen salt air in her nostrils; the blue sky, flecked with clouds, was good. All the natural world was right, and sensible, and beneficent. It was the man-world that was wrong, and mad, and horrible.<sup>30</sup>

Sterling's shuttling between the 'dull routines' of the city and his home in Carmel sheds light on another practice distinct to these art colonies. After all, a sense of retreat from urban modernity

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<sup>28</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Taos and Its Artists* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947), p. 41; Lois Palken Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Franklin Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Jack London, *The Valley of the Moon* (New York: McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie, 1913), p. 254.

was not only common to these three environments but reflected wider contemporary concerns.<sup>31</sup> But there was a distinct manner in which this desire was played out at the colonies: participants wanted a sense of belonging and comfortable settlement at the colonies but continued to enact restless, diverse, unplanned and often almost continuous movements. Luhan spent winters in Carmel and summers in Taos throughout the 1930s, while many of the artists with whom she associated in New Mexico spent varying amounts of time at the art colony: Andrew Dasburg spent a succession of winters in Taos, while Georgia O'Keeffe and Harvey Fergusson both spent summers in the region; others, like Willa Cather and Haniel Long, made more sporadic trips during this period. Mary Austin, instrumental in both Carmel and Santa Fe, at times lived at these two art colonies amongst numerous trips to Taos and periods living in Europe and New York. The distinctiveness of this colony practice is exemplified in the figure of London. London spent much of this period in transit or visiting myriad places, including Hawaii, Mexico and a spell sailing on his ship, the Snark. His time at the Carmel art colony was but one of these plots on a map, yet he is widely credited as a central member of the art colony community. London's sporadic, temporary visits attest to the attraction of this kind of art colony as an inviting and attractive milieu which does not negate movements and attachments to other places.

At the same time, this strain of hostility to the modern – differently nuanced between California and New Mexico colonies – is exemplified in the construction of colony homes: another notable distinguishing feature (which is explored more extensively in Chapter Two). In all three colonies, particular artists built houses to their own exact specification and did so with a sense of an organic relationship with the landscape. Amongst the towering redwoods of Carmel, this meant wooden structure houses which blended in with their surroundings. Austin's Paiute-inspired 'wickiup' treehouse showed her already flourishing interest in Native American culture (figure 1; p.

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<sup>31</sup> T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

29), a project followed up by the construction of an adobe house in Santa Fe some years later.<sup>32</sup>

Adobe was a popular choice with colonists in Santa Fe and Taos who associated it with the region's non-Anglo-American past and as an extension of the colours and shapes of New Mexico's distinctive topography. Luhan, Alice Corbin and Witter Bynner all built their houses in this style, with O'Keeffe commending her host for 'what Mabel has dug up out of the earth'.<sup>33</sup> Corbin's husband, William Penhallow Henderson, even established the Pueblo-Spanish Building Company in 1925 to renovate and build houses in Santa Fe in this style, moulding the adobe bricks by hand. Adobe was seen as 'ennobling' due to the material's opportunities for working with one's hands and fostering an identity with an 'exotic' but inherently American past.<sup>34</sup> In Carmel this was manifested in a celebration and romanticization of Spanish mission architecture as Spanish mission colonies were perceived as belonging to an 'idyllic golden age' in a 'picturesque land'.<sup>35</sup>

Carmel colonist Xavier Martinez's depiction of Carmel Mission (figure 2; p. 29) emphasizes adobe's organicism. Martinez employs a muted colour palette of natural tones, imbuing the mission with a warm hue, even in shadow. The almost flesh-toned appearance suggests an organic quality not only in terms of the building's intrinsic connection to the landscape but also of a human intimacy with such architecture. The artist's employment of tonalist brushstrokes enhance this effect by creating the painting's soft, hazy look. Like similar depictions of New Mexican adobe buildings by Santa Fe and Taos colonists, Martinez presents adobe architecture as a series of soft lines and curved corners: a natural, fitting outgrowth of the landscape. O'Keeffe, for instance, enhances both the flesh tones and curved lines of a church in Hernandez, New Mexico, while Ansel Adams'

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<sup>32</sup> Adobe was a Pueblo building material quickly adopted by Spanish settlers. Spanish colonizers in northern outposts took advantage of local conceptions of architecture since using adobe materials and techniques utilized the knowledge of their Native American work force. Kay Aiken Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos, 1898-1942: An American Cultural Center* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982), p. 26; Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 47.

<sup>33</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Scott A. Shields, *Artists at Continent's End: The Monterey Peninsula Art Colony, 1875-1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> Phoebe Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 2.

photograph of Taos Pueblo foregrounds the symmetry between pueblo structures and the surrounding mountains (figures 3 and 4; p. 30).

This hostility to the modern was further pursued in Santa Fe and Taos through such practices as the reinvigoration of the Santa Fe Fiesta, complete with costumed colonists participating in its annual parade, and involvement with the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts in New York in 1931, the accompanying catalogue for which featured writing by many art-colonists.<sup>36</sup> Corbin attests to the colonists' tendency to co-opt what they perceived to be a shared, and therefore usable, past in her account of the traditional ritual of self-torture still practiced by some *penitentes* when she was resident in New Mexico. In *Brothers of Light* she describes how *santos*, small religious carvings often found in Hispanic homes, were inspired by a faith that is alien to modern America yet is also simultaneously 'burned down deep in some remote fiber of our own race-memory'.<sup>37</sup>

Phoebe Kropp explores this appropriation of Spanish culture in California through an analysis of some representative examples of the built environment in *California Viejo*. This tendency was evident both in the state generally and with colonists like Austin, who used Carmel Mission as the setting for her novel *Isidro*. Her initial stay in Carmel was during composition of this novel, published in 1905: 'I spent a great deal of time on the lot of the Mission San Carlos Borromeo [Carmel Mission]. George [Sterling] walked over with me evening after evening, reconstructing the scene'.<sup>38</sup> Arnold Genthe, who toured California's Spanish missions during his formative years as a photographer, continued to remark on their 'impressive and picturesque' stature during a trip to New Mexico and Texas in 1926.<sup>39</sup> For artists seeking aesthetic reinvigoration, Hispanic culture provided picturesque scenes to capture artistically in much the same way as Native American culture and regional landscapes. Interest in mission churches grew steadily in 1890s and 1900s, emerging during the

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<sup>36</sup> Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933-1943* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> Alice Corbin, *Brothers of Light: The Penitentes of the Southwest* (Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree, 1998), p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1991), p. 298. All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>39</sup> Arnold Genthe, *As I Remember* (London: Harrap, 1937), pp. 208-10.



formative years of the Carmel colony.<sup>40</sup> This explains why interest in Spanish culture is burgeoning in Carmel rather than abundantly prevalent; mirroring the status of the Spanish revival in the American consciousness. Colonists in Carmel indicate an inclination towards this romanticization of non-Anglo cultures rather than providing a distinct example of it. Between 1900 and 1940, the timespan of this thesis, Kropp declares that ‘Anglos gradually stamped their versions of the Spanish past onto the local landscape’, just as colonists in Santa Fe and Taos were in New Mexico with Native American culture.<sup>41</sup> Although there are examples of colonists in all three colonies commenting on both Native American and Hispanic culture, the Spanish American was held up as the representative of a venerated past in Carmel whereas New Mexican colonists overwhelmingly placed a Native American ‘everyman’ on this pedestal. As historian of art Scott Shields argues, Californian missions and adobe buildings became ““acceptable” expressions of human presence in the landscape’.<sup>42</sup> This is reiterated in New Mexican colonies, too. Bynner, for instance, rhapsodizes about the presence of Native American adobe dwellings in an essay on Santa Fe:

And round about the landscape, in snug, earthen pueblos, were Indians, guarding the dignity of their race and instinctively living the beauty of their religion and their art, as they had been doing for hundreds of years.<sup>43</sup>

Kropp’s summation of culturally-appropriative practices in California pointedly describes these attitudes across Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos colonies: ‘these dreamy pasts that Anglo-Californians recalled were not their own. Local residents with longer tenures – Indians and Mexicans – played starring roles in the historical set pieces that Anglos assembled for their regional stage’.<sup>44</sup>

This is but one of many shared practices highlighting colonist interest in non-Anglo cultures: where Carmelites focused on celebrating America’s Spanish past, denizens of Santa Fe and Taos

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<sup>40</sup> Kropp, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Shields, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Witter Bynner, ‘Santa Fe: A City of Change’, in *Laughing Horse*, September 1924, in *The Works of Witter Bynner: Prose Pieces*, ed. by James Kraft (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), p. 45-49 (p. 46).

<sup>44</sup> Kropp, p. 2.

were more inclined to venerate Native American culture at the expense of Hispanic denigration (as I discuss in Chapter Three). Both Native American and Hispanic cultures offered useful models for art-colonists seeking new ways to live and to produce art. For Austin, Hispanic culture encapsulated that which artists and writers in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos were exploring, proclaiming that Hispanos had 'achieve[d] the thing we deemed impossible in our European-derived social complex, individualism without competition, complete socialization without standardization'.<sup>45</sup> There is an important distinction to be made in both embodiments of this tendency. Colonists' celebration of a 'Spanish colonial' past is markedly different to a sense of a 'Mexican present'. Kropp notes that in California the designation 'Mexican' 'usually indicated not a romantic regional past but the immigrant present'.<sup>46</sup> This distinction certainly extended to Anglo colonists in New Mexico too. While Henderson set out to impart 'lost' traditions of Spanish furniture making, playwright and Santa Fe colonist Lynn Riggs was maligning 'the stinking Mexicans! (You see, I already speak the lingo of the pueblo enthusiasts)'.<sup>47</sup> The relegation of Spanishness to a sentimentalized past rather than a political present is encapsulated by one of the most successful books published by Writers' Editions (the colonist cooperative publishing press discussed in Chapter Two), *Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca*, Santa Fe colonist Long's imaginative retelling of the Spanish explorer's travels through the American southwest.

The ethnic makeup of the southwest undoubtedly and uniquely shaped these art colonies. Although New Mexico's tri-ethnic character is an inaccurate and problematic notion, colonists' belief in this quality was influential. The tri-cultural mythos of the region was both an image and an organizing principle. It underlined a perception of a uniquely multicultural region and provided a basis for a model of shared space based on difference. The southwest was perceived as a place where different types of people coexisted without succumbing to assimilation. In this way, the region provided a model for artists who wanted to interact with each other without the risk of losing

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<sup>45</sup> Mary Austin, 'Mexicans and New Mexico', *Survey* 66 (1931), pp. 141-44, 187-90 (p.190).

<sup>46</sup> Kropp, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Braunlich, *Haunted by Home*, p. 9.

their autonomy and idiosyncratic needs as artists. Amongst Anglo-American peers, they could gain the benefit of being amongst diverse artists without the need to conform. Interactions with non-Anglo cultures thus provided an encounter with starkly different ways of life. In this they reinforce a sense of space outside of Anglo-American mainstream culture, where the artist could explore new ways of observing and communicating ideas in their bid to forge new aesthetics. By removing themselves from urban centres, these artists could confront perceived inadequacies in contemporary Anglo-American culture. These art colonies were located in places perceived in terms of absolute difference from New York in terms of their territorial history and indigenous inhabitants. This gave colony locales a unique status as both attractively 'exotic' and inherently American. Ideas of the west and southwest as regions full of dichotomies were well established by the time the colonies flourished: where civilization met savagery or where Anglo colonization met Spanish colonization. This made it the perfect location for rethinking and reviewing seemingly antithetical ideas. It is vital to note, however, that there was no rejection of mainstream culture or of socially-entrenched concepts like community, culture and gender. Instead, what is clear throughout the often diverse experiences of diverse individuals is a sense of revision, negotiation and adaptation. Colonists built on established assumptions about these regions and engaged with a historic rhetoric of enchantment, ultimately utilizing the art colony as a space to do things differently.

Crucially, these colonies offered opportunities for a different way of life: colonists could be innovative in the ways they lived as well as in the art they produced. Some of this was the result of the atmosphere created by particular artists and writers themselves, but the areas themselves also provided a specific attraction. After all, Luhan had run an extremely successful salon in Greenwich Village drawing a similar range of artists, so she had no need to move to Taos in order to draw like-minded people together.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Sterling had been central to the San Francisco artistic scene while Corbin had established a group of artistic acquaintances during her time as co-editor of *Poetry*

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<sup>48</sup> Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos*, p. 7.

magazine in Chicago.<sup>49</sup> But there were unique and specific attractions that drew colonists to these places. Amongst a convivial milieu of diverse individuals, art-colonists found a more satisfying form of community as well as artistic inspiration. They could interact closely with other cultures, immerse themselves in awe-inspiring landscapes and connect with a remote 'American' past. This experience was not 'just' about making art; it was about accessing a kind of life they felt to be more meaningful. In an unpublished manuscript, novelist and Santa Fe colonist Raymond Otis described time spent in New Mexico as 'another life – another world'.<sup>50</sup> As Daisy Bostick explains in a contemporary glimpse of the California colony, 'Ideals, and sometimes a whole scheme of life, change, when Carmel becomes home'.<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant reinforces this notion. After a trip to New Mexico, she proclaimed that 'the grandiose and historical scale' of the New Mexican landscape 'seemed to forecast some great spiritual event – something certainly that had nothing to do with the appalling mediocrity and vulgarity of the industrial civilisation'.<sup>52</sup>

Without doubt these colonies had considerable impact on national and international perceptions of region, particularly of the southwest, but the range of material makes it hard to generalize. At one end of the spectrum are figures like Austin and John Collier, both of whom concerned themselves with consciousness raising and fervently campaigned for Native American rights.<sup>53</sup> At the other end of the spectrum are endeavours like Spud Johnson's *Laughing Horse*, a

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<sup>49</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, p. 17; Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Manuscript 'Flight from Manhood', Albuquerque, CSWR, Raymond Otis Papers, Box 1. Otis had visited New Mexico as a child and set up home in Santa Fe in 1927, remaining resident until his early death in 1938. He found acclaim for his southwest and specifically Santa Fe set fiction including *Fire in the Night* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1934), *Miguel of Bright Mountain* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936) and *Little Valley* (London: Cresset, 1937). Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, pp. 130-32.

<sup>51</sup> Daisy Bostick with Dorothea Castelhun, *Carmel at Work and Play* (Carmel: The Seven Arts, 1925), p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, *Willa Cather: A Memoir* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 81-82. Sergeant was prompted to visit the region by the rhapsodies of Cather, and she moved to the Taos art colony in 1920. She divided her time between New York and the southwest throughout the 1930s, writing for numerous publications and recounting her friendship with Cather in *Willa Cather: A Memoir*. Lesley Poling-Kempes, *Ladies of the Canyons: A League of Extraordinary Women and Their Adventures in the American Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), pp. 256-58.

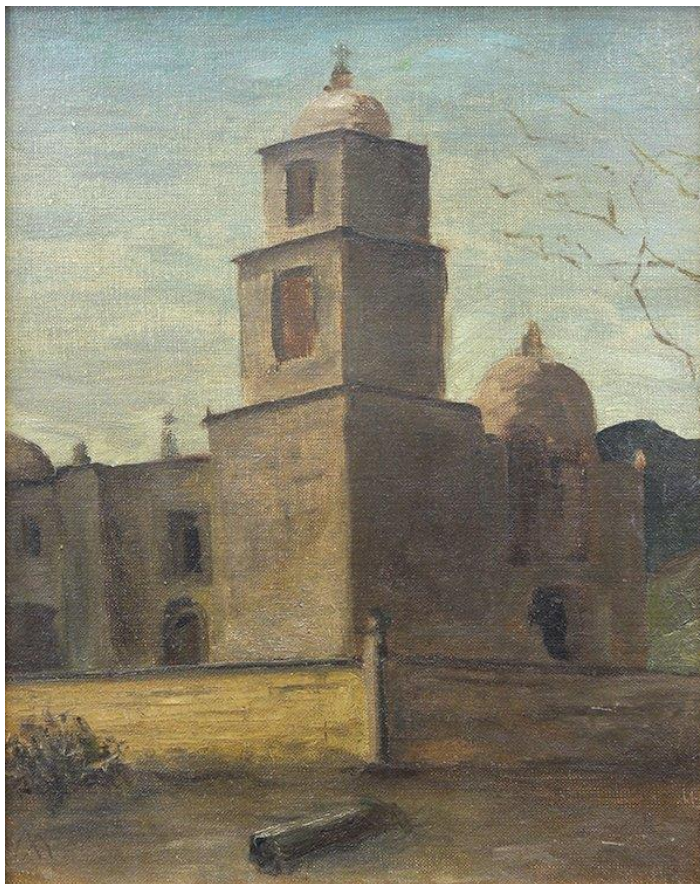
<sup>53</sup> John Collier first came to Taos at Luhan's invitation, staying with her for almost a year between 1920 and 1921. During this time he studied Native American history and culture, research that led him to fight vehemently for Native American rights. He successfully challenged attempts to disinherit Native American land and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the American Indian Defense Association. Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977).

one-page periodical produced in Santa Fe (and later Taos) for the amusement of other residents and visitors. Many colony activities, however, inhabit a middle ground between these two extremes. The colonist-run printing press Writers' Editions, discussed in Chapter Two, encapsulates the colony's sense of negotiation that I highlight throughout this thesis. Writers' Editions set out to reach a wider audience but on its own terms: championing progressive writing produced in the spirit of sharing. These tenets underpin the project of the western art colony. Through this approach to promotion and distribution, colonists raised consciousness of the specificity of the region and of the art colony as a unique type of group.

**Figure 1:** Mary Austin's Carmel study, based on a Paiute 'wickiup'



**Figure 2:** Xavier Martinez, *Carmel Mission*, [n.d.], oil on board

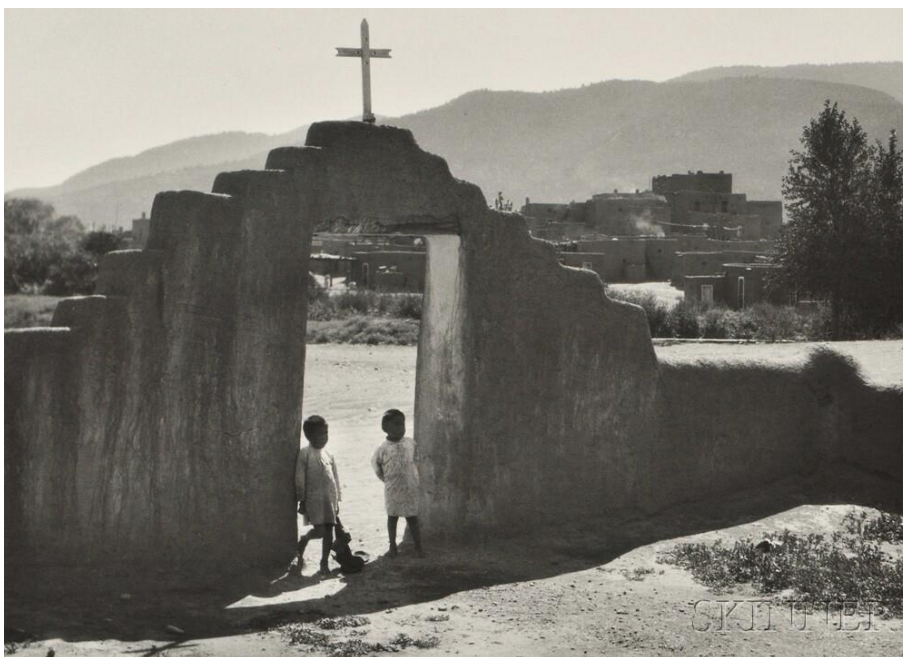




**Figure 3:** Georgia O'Keeffe, *Another Church, New Mexico*, 1931, oil on canvas



**Figure 4:** Ansel Adams, *South House and Church Gate*, 1929, gelatin silver print



## The geographic context of western art colonies

Finding collective terms of place and time for the art colonies situated in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos is an inherently fraught task. I have chosen to refer to them as western colonies, in full awareness of the inadequacy of any term to capture the complexity or nuances of these groups and these regions. In doing so I am not claiming that California and New Mexico are part of the same region. California and New Mexico are regions which share the politics of the border – its cultural diversity, territorial history, and detachment from the Anglo-urban East Coast – yet in geography, history and culture they vary substantially. Within their shared presence as part of ‘the west’, they have respective modifiers: ‘far west’ and ‘southwest’. However, it is not the conviction that these three colonies inhabit the same region that has shaped my study, but rather the idea that connections between Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos are discernible through the presence of shared practices and common threads within colonists’ understandings of and engagements with region and locale.

Colonists in California and New Mexico exalted these differing regions in similar terms, proclaiming possibilities of an ‘emotional or spiritual bond with the land’ offered by the ‘vastness of scope’ and ‘seeming timelessness of the forces of nature’.<sup>54</sup> Mary Austin describes Point Lobos in Carmel as ‘dramatic, danger-tipped, in the face of bursting spray heads torn up from primordial deeps of sea gardens, resolving into whorls and whorls of lambent color’.<sup>55</sup> Austin’s rhetoric of drama and enduring timelessness mirrors that of her counterparts in New Mexican colonies who also extoll the vibrant and affecting aspects of the region’s landscape: D. H. Lawrence, for instance, noted that ‘for a greatness of beauty I have never experienced anything like New Mexico’.<sup>56</sup> More than this, though, art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos all occupied spaces that participants understood by reference to ideas of the west and southwest.

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<sup>54</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 14 and p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 299.

<sup>56</sup> D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. By Edward D. Macdonald (New York: Viking, 1936), p. 142.



Anglo-American history, culture and geography have imbued this region with a sense of enriching diversity in terms of its relationship to Americanness. Any discussion of the regional identity of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos must of course be anchored in definitions of the 'west' and 'southwest', but these are far from simple terms. Traditional discourses have imposed geographic boundaries around these regions or attempted to define them within the narrow parameters of geographical features or historical events. Geographically, the American west is conventionally seen as starting around the ninety-eighth meridian and it spans the United States longitudinally from North Dakota to Texas.<sup>57</sup> This geographical border divides the humid plains to the east from the arid lands of the west, a feature that gives the region its distinct character: aridity is the most obvious characteristic of the American west, and water is the key factor of life and habitation.<sup>58</sup> But any attempt to define this huge geography as 'the west', of course, runs the risk of generalizing two thirds of the country. There are, indeed, some shared features, but these are insufficient to enable us comprehensively to describe this vast area. As Wilbur Jacobs asserts, any attempt to classify so diverse an area is doomed to be simplistic:

The West as a place floats on the map, almost like a puddle of mercury. The sub-puddles, spinning around, have so many socioeconomic, political, environmental, and cultural eddies that they are almost impossible to control when we try to write a coherent account.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The border between the American East and West is sometimes designated as the first or second tier of trans-Mississippi states or the 98<sup>th</sup> meridian. These are minimal distinctions, thus essentially the critical field defines the American West as a vast region encompassing nearly two thirds of the United States. This regionalization is extolled in numerous historical and literary surveys including Richard W. Etulain and Michael P. Malone, *The American West: A Modern History, 1900 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); David W. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002); Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its Peoples* (New York: Knopf, 1999); and Clyde A. Milner, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds, *The Oxford History of The American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>58</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Ginn, 1931), pp. 10-26. See also John Walton, *Western Times and Water Wars: State, Culture, and Rebellion in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Norris Hundley, Jr, *The Great Thirst: Californians and Water, 1770s-1990s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Donald J. Pisani, *To Reclaim A Divided West: Water, Law, and Public Policy, 1848-1902* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Clyde A. Milner, *A New Significance: Re-Envisioning the History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 49.

My endeavour to collectively discuss art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as places sharing ideas and patterns of behaviour is similarly susceptible to disagreement over the specific places they occupy on a map. I argue that these places are situated in the same region within the 'puddle' of the American west but the shared ideas in which I base this categorization are, like so many other attempts to define areas of the west, open to debate.

Definition of the southwest has encountered similar difficulty. The term 'southwest' was first employed to describe what critics now refer to as the Old Southwest: frontier territories to the south and west of United States land in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>60</sup> This was an area of land topographically bordered by the Tennessee River to the north, the Ocmulgee River in Georgia to the east, the Gulf of Mexico to the south, and the Mississippi River to the west.<sup>61</sup> Since then, the southwest's 'puddle of mercury' residing within the larger 'puddle' of the west has been subject to further sub-categorizations. In her survey of southwestern regionalization Lynn Perrigo identifies the Gulf Southwest (incorporating Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas), the Pacific Southwest (southern California and western Arizona), the aboriginal southwest (Arizona and New Mexico), the Old Spanish Southwest (which extends from central Texas to central California), and the New Southwest (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California).<sup>62</sup> Imposing boundaries on the location of the southwest has subsequently helped 'divide the world, or portions of it, into more manageable parts'.<sup>63</sup> Yet attempts to define the west or southwest through shared historical or geographic features are ultimately insufficient. As J. Frank Dobie points out, 'the boundaries of culture and rainfall never follow survey lines'.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, as D. W. Meinig asserts, 'the southwest is a distinctive

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<sup>60</sup> Richard Francaviglia, 'Elusive Land: Changing Geographic Images of the Southwest', in *Essays on the Changing Images of the Southwest*, ed. by Francaviglia and David Narrett (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), pp. 8-39 (p. 19).

<sup>61</sup> Thomas D. Clark and John D. W. Guice, *The Old Southwest, 1795-1830: Frontiers in Conflict* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 1-4.

<sup>62</sup> Lynn I. Perrigo, *The American Southwest: Its Peoples and Cultures* (Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), p. iii.

<sup>63</sup> Francaviglia, 'Elusive Land', p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> J. Frank Dobie, *Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1952), p. 14.

place to the American mind but a somewhat blurred place on American maps'.<sup>65</sup> This is due, in Santa Fe colonist Erna Fergusson's opinion, to the southwest being 'a crossing of South and West, but in the sense of breeding to produce offspring'.<sup>66</sup> Alongside Fergusson's, a plethora of new definitions have been proposed by anthropologists, historians, geographers, political scientists and sociologists, who base their arguments not only in notions of topography and climate but also of history and culture.<sup>67</sup>

For art-colonists and late nineteenth- and twentieth-century observers generally, the 'west' and 'southwest' incorporated an array of landscapes, climates and, above all, cultures. Its mix of natural, ethnic and cultural sites was, as Arrell Morgan Gibson describes, a veritable 'botanical mélange of anomalous environments' which appealed to artists and writers in California and New Mexico.<sup>68</sup> Nowhere else in the United States hosted the same combination of cultures; nowhere else were Native American, Hispanic and Anglo-American communities perceived to both coexist and remain distinct. During the zenith of the western art colony the west was home to nearly all of the country's Native Americans and most of its Hispanic population. Aspects of these cultures were clearly visible in the array of ruins preserved by the aridity of the region. The antiquity encountered in these regions was more than the shards of a bygone cultural world; it offered access to a wholly discrete cultural scene.

Nevertheless, grouping inhabitants into a triad of Anglo-American, Native American and Hispanic ignores the ethnic diversity of the region and its reflection of wider contemporary trends. The Anglo portion of this western designation included native-born, English-speaking folk but excluded more recent immigrants to the US. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards the region

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<sup>65</sup> D. W. Meinig, *Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographical Change, 1600-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Erna Fergusson, *Our Southwest* (New York: Knopf, 1940), pp. 3-4.

<sup>67</sup> For a survey of this range of approaches see Richard Nostrand, 'A Changing Culture Region', in *Borderlands Sourcebook: A Guide to the Literature on Northern Mexico and the American Southwest*, ed. by Ellwyn R. Stoddard, Richard L. Nostrand and Jonathan P. West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), pp. 6-15.

<sup>68</sup> Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies: Age of the Muses, 1900-1942* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), p. 9.

played host to waves of European immigrants, as did the rest of the United States. Huge numbers of Italian, Irish and Jewish immigrants arrived in the US over the course of half a century, setting up home here as elsewhere.<sup>69</sup> African-Americans and Asian immigrants were both sizeable cultural presences, yet both were notably absent from cultural depictions of the west as a place where Anglo-Americans encountered the ancient American races of Native American and Hispanic peoples.<sup>70</sup>

New Western Historians have countered the mythologies surrounding pioneers and wagon trains with histories that have acknowledged both the urbanization of the west and the environmental fallout which resulted from settlement and the exploitation of material resources. As Donald Worster has written, there is a need for 'a new appreciation of nature's powers of recovery, and new sense of purpose in this region – all of which means we need a new past'.<sup>71</sup> While art-colonists perceived the region as 'a world elsewhere', the influence of economic modernity in California and New Mexico at the beginning of the twentieth century must be similarly acknowledged. Mass transportation systems and economic dependence on tourism and agriculture were all present in these places yet, interestingly, their appeal for many colonists was the sense of unspoiled beauty gained from ignoring these industrial influences. It appeared that Santa Fe had been left behind when the railroad bypassed it in 1880, but this fact became a crucial part of its attraction to colonists, as Hal Rothman tells us: 'The fifteen-mile wagon or auto ride from the train station in nearby Lamy became a crucial division between the world of the railroad and that of mythic Santa Fe'.<sup>72</sup> Taos and Carmel were similarly detached from railway routes, affording a sense of detachment not only from industrial America but also from the larger population centres that evolve around these travel hubs. In this way Carmel is distinct from other parts of California and

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<sup>69</sup> Judith Boyce de Mark, 'Introduction', in *Essays in Twentieth-Century New Mexico History*, ed. by de Mark (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 1-11 (p. 3).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 253.

<sup>72</sup> Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, p. 93.

aligned with the appeal of the New Mexican art colonies. Critics exclude California from definitions of the southwest on the grounds that although it 'shared most of [its] history' the southwest had 'produced people very different from those who find living easy', but Carmel colonists relished the opportunity to live without the conveniences of railroad access, paved streets or even electricity.<sup>73</sup>

New Mexico and California both entered the twentieth century as 'railroad-served agricultural empire[s]'.<sup>74</sup> Agricultural strength was augmented in the new century by other flourishing industries. California had already established its strength through its diversity of production (where many states relied on one crop, California yielded over two hundred farm commodities) but by the start of the twentieth century California was also pioneering the drilling and refining of oil.<sup>75</sup> The discovery and subsequent exploitation of oil and natural gas led more entrepreneurial individuals to turn towards the west in the early decades of the twentieth century as the region increasingly came to be seen as 'the nation's cornucopia of natural resources'.<sup>76</sup> New Mexico's health industry, for instance, went from strength to strength as tuberculosis sufferers sought out sanatoria which took advantage of the region's dry climate.<sup>77</sup>

The railroads also helped to promote health-seeking visitors and the tourist industry flourished. California and New Mexico were both included in the *See America First* series of travel guides produced between 1912 and 1931 to promote domestic tourism. The California guide launched the series and travel writer George Wharton James' *California: Romantic and Beautiful* was soon joined by his impression of New Mexico entitled *New Mexico: The Land of the Delight Makers*.<sup>78</sup> Both works encapsulate the touristic rhetoric about the west common in this era, as well as the imperialistic bent of American tourism. As Rothman asserts, 'tourism is the most colonial of colonial

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<sup>73</sup> Fergusson, *Our Southwest*, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2007), p. 157.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Rolle and Arthur Verge, *California: A History* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2008), p. 179.

<sup>76</sup> Etulain and Malone, *The American West: A Modern History*, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> See Richard Melzer, *Sanatoriums of Santa Fe* (Charleston: Arcadia, 2014) and James O. Breeden, *Medicine in the West* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1982).

<sup>78</sup> George Wharton James, *California: Romantic and Beautiful* (Boston: Page, 1914) and *New Mexico: Land of the Delight Makers* (Boston: Page, 1920).

economies'.<sup>79</sup> James' guides did not simply catalogue scenic wonders but instead 'articulated an evolutionary view of history that favored Anglo-American settlement'.<sup>80</sup> By describing the stages of a state's development towards inevitable and fortuitous Anglo settlement, the guides reinforced Anglocentric ideals of American expansionism. Although tourists and colonists differed in their engagements with place, the art-colonist rhetoric of manifest destiny expressed an imperialist mindset which had an effect on the areas they colonized (as I explore in the following chapter).

Tourism's imperialistic impulse in the west highlights California and New Mexico's context of territorial turmoil. The areas that hosted the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos share a similarly convoluted history of conquest and colonialism. Californian land as well as New Mexican land ceded in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo held a unique position as at once Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Anglo-American. These were shared pasts on shared lands. Substantial populations of Native and Spanish-speaking people in these places meant socio-cultural resonances of this history of conquest were still very much present.

This melange of influences gave these areas hybrid cultures. By the time they played host to art colonies, California and New Mexico were both characterized by the amalgamation of diverse elements. Both states even experienced a period as 'legal hybrid[s]' between their conquest by the US and incorporation as states.<sup>81</sup> As California was annexed at that precarious moment when one highly-contentious issue, slavery, overshadowed all others, it maintained interim territorial status while debates raged as to whether this newly acquired land should allow slavery.<sup>82</sup> During this period its residents were not quite Spanish, American or, indeed, Mexican. In the same way, New Mexicans remained in limbo as Anglo-America resisted the prospect of a predominantly Hispanic American state. In 1905 politicians made a concerted effort to bring New Mexico into the union by proposing that it be joined together with another as yet unincorporated territory more densely

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<sup>79</sup> Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Shaffer, *See America First*, p. 182.

<sup>81</sup> Starr, *California: A History*, p. 73.

<sup>82</sup> Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), pp. 47-50.

populated with Anglo-Americans, Arizona, to form one state.<sup>83</sup> Not only would this end New Mexico's indeterminate status, but politicians also hoped the move would win over those in the Senate who had opposed New Mexico gaining statehood on the grounds of its predominantly Hispanic population.<sup>84</sup> Anglo-American governors of New Mexico were in favour of the move but Miguel A. Otero, New Mexico's only Hispanic governor, led a minority resistance against the prospect of joint statehood. Ultimately Otero got his wish, but not as a result of his efforts: it was the mostly Anglo-American population of Arizona who prevented the move, refusing to be joined to its largely Hispanic neighbour.

The work of the New Western Historians has sought to recover these distinct experiences of the ethnically diverse population of the area and to assert the mythological status of America's 'gate[d]' borders, particularly the marker distinguishing the US from Mexico. Patricia Limerick argues:

When politicians in the 1980s bemoaned the fact that America 'lost control' of its border with Mexico, they dreamed up a lost age of mastery. In fact, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, the Mexican border was a social fiction that neither nature nor people in search of opportunity observed.<sup>85</sup>

Occupying this region, the art colonies at Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos share a common but complicated regional context. California and New Mexico share historical, political and cultural contexts which influenced the experiences of art-colonists in these places. Here colonists inhabited places only recently defined territorially and imbued with the complexities of sharing a border. Intricacies of politics, economics and cultures profoundly influenced the milieu of the art colony and attest to the need for a collective exploration of these colonies. The areas playing host to these

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<sup>83</sup> Malone and Etulain, *The American West: A Twentieth-Century History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 61; David Van Holtby, *Forty-Seventh Star: New Mexico's Struggle for Statehood* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> Linda C. Noel, *Debating American Identity: Southwestern Statehood and Mexican Immigration* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 251.

colonies were markedly different from New York and its Europeanized, Anglo-American culture. The colonies' presence within this complicated region unifies them and forms the basis of my collective terminology for the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos.

The regions hosting western art colonies are linked by shared ideas. Nineteenth-century reports of the southwest established the tradition of describing the region as 'mystical, ancient, and fantastic', with a combination of scientific reasoning and romanticism: 'the perceptions of this region were based in part on the search for truth as well as the ability to fabricate and embellish it'.<sup>86</sup> Colonists at Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos all express this view of colony locations and also reinforce this philosophy through their search for personal growth at the western art colony. They sought to find alternatives to mainstream American culture which they perceived to be available in the cultural diversity of these settings. Erna Fergusson's summation of the southwest reflects this point of view:

The southwest developed tolerance and friendliness. Differences not only in religion but of moral standard were accepted without criticism, without even that more insulting effort to convert. [... A place of] people who forgot their sectional differences and lived as helpful neighbours with folk of race and color, religion and moral codes different from their own.<sup>87</sup>

Fergusson's appraisal here indicates how the southwest seemed the perfect location for these colonies to be established and to thrive: they were already places understood as nurturing the altered patterns of behaviour desired by art-colonists. But her remarks are also highly idealistic and ignore the social realities of 'folk of race and color'.

### **The historical context of western art colonies**

When they entered the southwest, participants in the Santa Fe and Taos colonies followed in the footsteps of a succession of Anglo visitors concerned with regional image making and the cultural construction of New Mexico's identity. A number of significant works trace the evolution of the myth

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> Fergusson, *Our Southwest*, p. 17.



of southwestern enchantment, illuminating different stages and incarnations of this influential rhetoric through an analysis of chosen examples. Their work provides an important context for my own, elucidating the extent to which and manner in which participants at western art colonies subscribed to this prior rhetoric of romantic otherness. My own work also follows their approach by indicating a specific incarnation of this tradition and the ways in which western colonies were in dialogue with it, as well as the specific purpose for which these practices were invoked. The art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos subsequently represent a distinctive phase in the history of southwestern mythologization, particularly through art and literature.

Conquest of the region in 1846 heightened awareness of and interest in the southwest, an interest which manifested in accounts of the region peppered with the rhetoric of manifest destiny. As Chris Wilson explains in *The Myth of Santa Fe*, early accounts from Anglo-Americans in New Mexico were characterised by assumptions about manifest destiny and pseudoscientific racialist themes: 'Pueblo Indians were first praised during this period as a more pure and, therefore, industrious and moral people than the "mongrel" Mexicans. This attitude underlies the subsequent Puebloophile and Hispanophobic prejudices of some Anglo romantics'.<sup>88</sup> As this quotation attests, non-Anglo cultures were central to imaginings of the southwest from this early stage. As Leah Dilworth explains at length in *Imagining Indians*, Native American cultures were perceived as 'exotic', primitive and self-sufficient in harsh but beautiful landscapes, while pueblos were seen as inviting arenas of picturesque religious ceremonies and charming handmade objects associated, in the minds of Anglo visitors, with a simple Edenic past.<sup>89</sup> Dilworth goes on to argue that primitivism played a major part in 'defining the southwest as a distinct cultural region' and this set of practices was fuelled by colonists' engagements with and interpretations of New Mexico's non-Anglo cultures. Artists and writers in Santa Fe and Taos certainly adhere to Dilworth's argument that southwestern Native Americans came to represent the qualities that Anglo-Americans perceived as lacking in their

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<sup>88</sup> Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), p. 50.

<sup>89</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 2.

own culture. In this way Native American culture was appropriated as an archetypal model of the unique, the handmade, the rural and, above all, as the embodiment of that central late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century concern: authenticity.<sup>90</sup>

Accounts extolling the rhetoric of heroic conquest and annexation, which characterize Anglo reports in 1840s and 50s New Mexico, shift to the now familiar rhetoric of romantic otherness in the 1880s. At this juncture manifest destiny comes up against a perceived usefulness of the primitive: 'Theodore Roosevelt, an avid imperialist, made strenuous primitivism, which often invoked the figure of the Indian, into a kind of progressivist religion'.<sup>91</sup> The southwest's non-Anglo populations, and particularly the region's tri-cultural mythos, became important characters in the 'story' of New Mexico. When artists and writers at the Santa Fe and Taos colonies engaged with Native American and Hispanic New Mexicans as positive and negative models for the more meaningful way of life they sought in western art colonies, they engaged with a long tradition of enchantment and otherness in the southwest. The shift from progressive boosterism to romanticized enchantment heralded an altered version of manifest destiny. As Audrey Goodman explains, from the 1880s onwards Anglo-Americans 'projected themselves' into southwestern landscapes: an inherently colonizing tactic.<sup>92</sup> Tracing the mythic image of the southwest into the beginning of the twentieth century, Goodman suggests that Anglo engagements with the region during this period were characterized by 'strategies of negotiation' between the city and the country, the centre and the periphery, the insider and the outsider, and between invention and authenticity. Participants in western art colonies certainly adhere to this summation and thus reiterate and subscribe to a prior rhetoric of the southwest, seeking to mediate dichotomous ideas about movement and settlement, self and other, and autonomy and commitment in their negotiation of community, culture and marriage. However, Goodman indicates the 'purpose' of these tactics as an 'imagined escape' from

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<sup>90</sup> See Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

<sup>91</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. .6

<sup>92</sup> Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*, p. xiv.

social anxieties through the ‘*recovery of society’s cohesive forces*’.<sup>93</sup> I argue, conversely, that participants at western art colonies sought to play with and ultimately develop *new* ways to find a satisfying sense of social cohesion.

This rhetoric of enchantment became a central tenet of touristic narratives in New Mexico during a time of economic stagnation. An antithetical image of Santa Fe as a burgeoning ‘Anytown, USA’ was simultaneously pushed by boosters attempting to stimulate the city’s finances through the enticement of settlers and businesses to the area.<sup>94</sup> These two opposing images fought it out for the ‘official’ image of the region, with opportunities for progress expounded in non-fiction pamphlets produced by the Territorial Bureau of Immigration while stereographs, postcards and magazine articles presented the idea of the region’s ancient, ‘exotic’ otherness. The connection between this rhetoric of enchantment and artistic rendering of New Mexico is evident in these early promotional examples.

Nineteenth-century journalist Charles Fletcher Lummis encapsulates the historical moment when the rhetoric of southwestern enchantment found traction in the American consciousness: namely, the moment when progress and tourism converged and New Mexico’s promotional narratives were synthesized: ‘By rendering the southwest exotic but unthreatening, such stories of underdevelopment made the region alluring for investors, potential settlers, and armchair travelers alike’.<sup>95</sup> Lummis championed both southern California and New Mexico over the course of his career, extolling rhetoric continued by colonists further up the California coast in Carmel as well as in Santa Fe and Taos. Lummis was central to the southern California exaltation of Spanish mission architecture, a romanticizing tendency also enacted by colonists in the Carmel art colony. Indeed, romanticized and culturally appropriative images of California and New Mexico both originated in prior rhetoric about romanticized region. Yet in both regions this touristic narrative went beyond ‘the typical booster come-on’ in that ‘these romantic regional memories shaped the cultural

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. xv (my emphasis).

<sup>94</sup> Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*, p. 80.

<sup>95</sup> Goodman, p. 3.

landscape, from built environment to social relations'.<sup>96</sup> It is important to note, however, that colonies highlight distinctions between hostility to modernity and nostalgia. Colonists were not nostalgic in the sense that they sought escape from the present through retreat to a selectively remembered past experience, but were instead grasping for a sense of a usable past through which they could work out new ways of doing things.<sup>97</sup> In this way colonists in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos looked back in order to look forward. Incorporating aspects of non-Anglo cultures into a 'better' way to be an Anglo-American artist, these artists and writers sought to construct something new rather than replicate something old. Yet, in both regions, colonist engagements with and promotion of Native American and Hispanic culture contributed to deeply problematic strategies of cultural appropriation in which 'Anglo entrepreneurs carefully culled choice elements[, ...] silenced others, and rearranged these pieces into compelling regional narratives that spoke to their hopes for the future'.<sup>98</sup> Beneficial aspects of Native American and Hispanic culture were identified and combined with the social and artistic activities enjoyed at the colony. As Phoebe Kropp asserts, the cultural appropriation of Native American and Hispanic pasts was a prominent and widespread reaction in contemporary America:

This cultural memory [of Native American and Hispanic pasts] is not simply a West Coast curiosity; it is an example of a central method Americans have used to express race and nation. From blackface minstrelsy to a passion for Navajo blankets, white Americans' ability to disdain and yet desire, to reject and yet possess, was a familiar and consistent strategy for dealing with non-white people and cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Patterns of cultural appropriation are not so much bizarre as ominously rational (and national).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Kropp, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> For more on this distinction with the concept of nostalgia see Aaron Santesso, *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006) and Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction: 1810-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>98</sup> Kropp, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

What marks these art colonies out as distinct, then, is the *ways* in which participants enacted these tactics and the reasons fuelling them: patterns of behaviour which were present in all three of these art colonies.

Lummis gained popularity after a series of travelogues were published charting his cross-country journeys to recover from malaria. His far-reaching influence on New Mexico's rhetoric of enchantment is exemplified by his editorship of *Land of Sunshine* magazine, between 1894 and 1909, during which Lummis 'cultivated western writers and painters to help wrap boosterism in a mantle of art, poetry, scholarly history, and ethnography'.<sup>100</sup> Through this approach Lummis signified the coming together of New Mexico's two strands of promotion: ancient romanticism and modern progress. Enchantment and boosterism were no longer at odds, and the rhetoric of romantic otherness was confirmed as the region's dominant narrative. As Wilson surmises, 'Once statehood was achieved and Santa Fe resolved its contending identities, the romantic image of the city became the central vehicle for economic resurgence and the blueprint for its physical transformation'.<sup>101</sup>

Wilson notes that the Santa Fe Railway 'promoted the same natural and cultural attractions as Lummis did'.<sup>102</sup> This explains why much of the literature concerned with New Mexican art colonies similarly focus on these two aspects (as I explore in the next chapter). The importance of these appealing elements should not be underestimated, as participants in western colonies did build on a prior rhetoric of enchantment to a significant extent. However, what artists and writers gained from this understanding of region needs to be considered alongside what they gained from being present in the colony itself: an aspect overlooked until now and tackled by the approach of this thesis.

Anglo interest in the region increased when this romantic image emerged in the 1880s and substantially increased when the railroad company began promoting the southwest in the following decade. Yet when rail access was first proposed, Santa Fe governors balked at the suggestion that they subsidize the railway, to which most towns agreed. Having refused, they subsequently panicked

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<sup>100</sup> Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*, p. 88.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

about the prospect of being left behind, ultimately conceding to pay for a spur line to Lamy, the nearby town named in honour of the Catholic bishop fictionalized by Willa Cather in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.<sup>103</sup> This transpired to be an important part of Santa Fe's image of romantic otherness as it added to ideas of the place being inaccessible and untouched by mass transportation.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway arrived in Santa Fe in 1880 and by 1885 the pueblos of southwestern Native Americans were accessible from both coasts.<sup>104</sup> With the railway came a shift in promotional rhetoric of the southwest: from enticing settlers and businesses, to attracting tourists and health seekers. Indeed, railroad promotion can also be credited with the perception of New Mexico as a destination for health seekers; many colonists originally made the trip to Santa Fe or Taos to recuperate from illness, including Alice Corbin and Lynn Riggs. This quintessential narrative of the region was given a further boost in 1895 when the railroad company reorganized, seeking more passengers and higher ticket sales through the promotion of tourism. The calendars which the Santa Fe Railway began to produce in 1907 are characterised by Wilson as 'situated in an ahistorical world devoid of modern manufactured objects, dressed in traditional costumes and often posed before a multistory pueblo, these calendar Indians are dignified but aloof'.<sup>105</sup> Compounding this problematic representation is the fact that the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway often traded rail passes for paintings and photographs depicting the region, enabling a sense of uninhibited movement to, from and around the southwest which was denied to the non-Anglo subjects of their artworks. Santa Fe and Taos colonists would later consolidate this in the depiction of static Native and Spanish-speaking Americans alongside their own mediations of comfort and settlement with autonomous movement fostered by the western art colony's alternative model of community.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>104</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*, p. 90.

It is at this moment, for Dilworth, that 'the rhetoric of colonization began to recede and the rhetoric of sightseeing began to take over'.<sup>106</sup> The history of this rhetoric of enchantment certainly aligns with Dilworth's statement but, I argue, experiences and interpretations of the southwest produced by participants in the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies show that the former rhetoric never fully disappeared and that remnants of colonial rhetoric continued to pepper colonist art and writing grounded in popular images of the southwest as a place of romantic otherness. Mary Austin and Oliver La Farge both assume Native American narrative voice, exhibiting an extremely problematic literary device ingrained in ideas of Anglo power, responsibility and control over other cultures. Speaking about her attraction to the southwestern landscape and the extensive body of work she created in New Mexico, Georgia O'Keeffe further invokes a recognisable colonial rhetoric. Of Padernal, the mesa which features in many of her paintings, O'Keeffe often quipped, 'God told me if I painted it enough I could have it'.<sup>107</sup> Ostensibly describing the artist's enamoured response to the New Mexican environment, O'Keeffe's turn of phrase reveals a darker sense of colonization and recalls the Anglo annexation upon which this rhetoric was built. Furthermore, it emphasizes practices of cultural colonization, taking ownership of southwest landscapes through Anglo-produced art and literature, which have underlined image making in the region.

As we have seen, much of the available discourse on colonist-Native interaction has been seen through a postcolonial lens. I am not disagreeing with this interpretation in this thesis, but I am asserting that the social arrangement of the colony, its combination of separation and immersion, is matched in encounters with Native Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic groups. Focusing on the intricacies of this dialogue between cultures does not exonerate Anglo-American art-colonists' inequitable relationship with Native and Hispanic communities. I do not wish to ignore the troubling effects of engagements between Anglo-Americans and local peoples in the southwest, which have

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<sup>106</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 17.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Laurie Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: Seaview, 1980), p. 235.

been well documented.<sup>108</sup> What I do in this thesis instead, however, is present a detailed interpretation of this relationship and its outcomes. In this way I extend the work of critics scrutinizing interactions between Anglo- and non-Anglo-Americans in the American west. Dilworth, Goodman and Martin Padget have all identified troubling aspects of the relationship between Anglo-Americans and local peoples in the region and the hierarchies of power that were often perpetuated. By focusing on the politics of representation in places like the American southwest they turn a critical eye on colonial and recently decolonized situations. Dilworth, Goodman and Padget all explore different aspects of interactions often erased with postcolonial critiques. These works highlight how intercultural engagements in the southwest were problematic but nonetheless diverse. I engage with this body of literature throughout my discussion of artists and writers in this thesis and extend this field by highlighting the specific interpretations of other cultures pursued in the colony milieu. Like these cultural studies I acknowledge postcolonial critiques and extend them by elucidating particular aspects of these complex and problematic engagements, examining what these intercultural encounters reveal about the colony.

Dilworth examines the mythologization of indigenous culture, both in terms of the complexity of its processes and its wide-reaching ramifications, asserting that it reveals much about the development of Anglo-American cultural anxieties. In *Imagining Indians in the Southwest* she traces twentieth-century depictions of the 'primitive Indian', outlining how Anglo-American perspectives on southwestern Native Americans changed from archetypes of the 'vanishing' to the 'ideal' American.<sup>109</sup> Both stances invoke the rhetoric of the primitive, a field in which 'we' fantasize about 'them', making Anglo-American engagements with Native cultures ultimately a 'reactionary

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<sup>108</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*; Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*; Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008); Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Raymond William Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982).

<sup>109</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 3.



response'.<sup>110</sup> As Dilworth asserts, Native Americans were particularly exploited as 'idealized versions of history, spirituality, and unalienated labor'.<sup>111</sup> Yet rather than merely condemning these practices of cultural primitivism, Dilworth's work explores why these were such successful and powerful strategies. By focusing on the culture that made this possible as well as its wider social implications Dilworth examines how primitivism worked so successfully in the American southwest and, by extension, the role of primitivism in the colonization of knowledge. In this she elucidates the levels of meaning to be gleaned from analysis of such tactics, focusing on these problematic encounters in order to 'investigate' and 'defuse the power [of] these images and texts'.<sup>112</sup> By highlighting that egocentric encounters invite rather than close down further analysis, *Imagining Indians* develops the broad aims of postcolonial criticism. Art-colonists' engagements with Native and Spanish-speaking populations were similarly self-serving, but their paternalistic nature should also not inhibit further analysis. Instead, analysis of the specific ways in which these problematic patterns of behaviour were exhibited elucidates inter-ethnic relations in the southwest and reinforces an understanding of the western art colony as a specific form of settlement.

Goodman displays a similar impetus in her discussion of the representation of the southwest as symbolic space in Anglo-American literature. In *Translating Southwestern Landscapes* Goodman suggests that Anglo writers 'projected themselves' into a southwest which became a battleground between 'dreams of self-transformation and fears of irreversible assimilation'.<sup>113</sup> Like Dilworth's work, this book scrutinizes these mechanics of imperialist nostalgia through close reading of various individuals' experiences in the southwest. Yet, although Goodman highlights how these notions were ultimately self-serving, she is more forgiving of the intercultural encounters which were translated into literary depictions of the region. This is particularly true of her summation that writers succeeded in distancing themselves from an entrenched imperialist mindset through

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>113</sup> Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*, p. xiv.

presence in the southwest: 'Extended experience in the southwest challenged existing [...] rhetorical modes traditionally engaged to impose colonial authority. [...] Southwestern writing proved that no literary language and no single form of representation could adequately represent an entire set of cultures'.<sup>114</sup> *Translating Southwestern Landscapes* subsequently emphasizes the diversity of art produced by Anglo-American writers in the southwest, a diversity reinforced by colony-produced art, and emphasizes the need for close examination of this aesthetic canon. These interpretations display nuanced engagements with postcolonial themes rather than 'unequivocally confirming a dominant imperial ideology'.<sup>115</sup> Goodman's assertion that 'Southwestern texts and images articulate a struggle between the intensity of an outsider's individual perception and his or her historical and cultural awareness' ultimately emphasizes the relationship between the centre and the periphery and its influence on Anglo artistic interpretations of the region.<sup>116</sup> Her work is immensely useful to my discussion since connections between the modern American city and the 'primitive' southwest (both physically enacted as well as imaginatively rendered) are crucial to understanding the western art colony as a specific form of settlement.

Padget reinforces the importance of this centre-periphery framework by exploring how the southwest was constructed and produced for a mainstream Anglo-American audience. In *Indian Country* Padget analyses the relationship between the experiences of artists and writers in the southwest and the development of the region as a mythic space in the minds of viewers and readers. Through a close examination of a range of representations, Padget explores the construction of cultural geography in a region which became synonymous with picturesque primitivism. Where I focus on how art-colonist encounters with Native and Hispanic Americans influenced their sense of personal development in the southwest, Padget's study implements a centrifugal focus to explore the dissemination of ideas and experiences. His attention to these encounters in the region is, however, sensitive to include Native American reactions alongside Anglo experiences in the region in

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

order to present a more comprehensive account of these southwestern interactions. Native American responses to their appropriation and colonization should not be underestimated, he argues, as a history of Anglo-American travels in the southwest is more accurately understood as a 'dialectic between incorporation and resistance'.<sup>117</sup> This is a common pitfall of postcolonial discourse. By addressing the reactions of colonized people, Padget avoids replicating the monopoly on knowledge exhibited by these Anglo-American visitors in the southwest.

My own project is similarly susceptible to this limitation. Since my aim is to understand the art colony as a specific form of settlement, I focus primarily on the experiences of and artistic representations created by Anglo-American art-colonists. I am, to some extent, also constrained by the materials available. Information about these colonies and those associated with them is disparate and often contradictory. That which is available concerns Anglo colonists' engagements with Native and Spanish-speaking peoples but fails to record reactions on the part of these 'others'. I therefore follow their choices of appropriation which often render Native and Hispanic Americans mute. The problematic nature of this situation is, in itself, informative. As Marianna Torgovnick has noted, 'the primitive does what we ask it to do. Voiceless, it lets us speak for it. It is our ventriloquist's dummy – or so we like to think'.<sup>118</sup> I fall foul of 'speaking for' Native Americans and Hispanic communities as much as those art-colonists I discuss. Although the lack of material on these people's experiences with art colonies hinders my exploration of this interesting facet on a complex relationship, this absence is also acknowledged and analysed in my critical approach to colonists' work. Indeed, the lack of information available on the experiences of local peoples with colonists attests to relationships based on 'consumption and appropriation rather than communication between subjects'.<sup>119</sup> My analysis of these tactics reveals much about the appeal and function of these art colonies and affirms the monopoly on knowledge exhibited by these colonists without, I

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<sup>117</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, p. 9.

<sup>119</sup> Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 8.

hope, perpetuating it myself. My discussion lacks the voice of the colonized because it was lacking in these colonies.

My thesis is grounded in the notion of these three places as conceptually interconnected yet distinct. What is particularly interesting, and what further reinforces my interpretation of these colonies as a collective entity, is that underlining these variations are strikingly similar patterns of behaviour: an inclination towards a balance between spontaneous movement and a sense of home, a desire for controlled contact with other cultures, and a desire to both adhere to and challenge established gender roles. These common threads are artistically rendered through themes such as mutability, mediation and reconciled dichotomies: the qualities provided by the specific art colony environment. That is to say, not everyone was doing the same thing but enough were to identify distinguishing features of the art colony project. I focus on some of these aspects in turn in the chapters that follow. Chapter 1 provides a focused discussion of the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos, outlining their vibrant spectrum of participants and exploring these western colonies in current scholarship. The chapter pays particular attention to how this version of the art colony evolved out of a more popular model and engaged with a prior regional rhetoric of southwesternism espoused by a range of travellers and visitors. Chapter Two moves on to explore issues of travel and the ways in which colonists' movements were brought in to tension with their desires for residence at the art colony. Participants in these places actively created a sense of community through acts of homemaking and artistic collaboration, while those who made the colonies their home played host to an ever-changing crowd of guests. Chapter Three extends these ideas by examining forms of engagement and interaction between art colony participants and regional Native Americans and Hispanos. Attempts to penetrate and communicate cultural difference led to an interesting artistic approach characterized by a combination of empirical research and poetic imagination, but ultimately reinforced contemporary racist and racialist notions about Native American and Hispanic cultures. Chapter Four consolidates these discussions of managed connectedness by exploring

attempts to reformulate marriage exhibited by both male and female art-colonists. Artists and writers saw opportunities for both sexes to negotiate popular understandings of how men and women should behave and thus utilized the art colony's improvisatory environment to confront contemporary social anxieties. Throughout these discussions I argue that Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos constitute a specific type of artistic group because they hosted many of the same people who explored many of the same interests and anxieties and represented many of the same themes in their art and writing.

## Chapter One:

### Defining the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos

I begin my investigation of western art colonies with an introduction to the colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos, presenting a focused discussion of the creation myths of each place and bringing to life the scope and variety of participants drawn to these locations. This is followed by a survey of critical and historical sources that specifically address the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos in order to ascertain the merits and shortcomings of the current field of scholarship and thus reinforce the significance of this thesis. The chapter then moves on to focus on the art colony tradition as it developed in France and the American northeast and questions of definition that this raises for my exploration of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as a specific version of the art colony. I conclude with a discussion of the southwesternism espoused by art-colonists, as examples of a wide array of travellers attracted to California and particularly New Mexico, and the extent to which these western art colonies subscribe to a prior rhetoric of romantic otherness associated with these regions.

The appeal of Carmel's secluded coastal location was first noted by real estate developers Frank Hubbard Powers and James Franklin Devendorf in the 1880s. Seeing the potential in marketing places to artists, they bought up much of the land with the express aim of cultivating an 'all-round healthy little town'.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, reflecting on the zenith of the art colony in a 1911 article, the *San Francisco Call* credited the pair with the establishment of the artist's colony: 'Frank Powers, the visionary with the square jaw, and his right hand man, the diplomatic Devendorf, were right in their confidence that western art could be cradled where western history was born'.<sup>2</sup> They were, perhaps, buoyed by the presence of a nearby painting colony in Monterey, which had been hosting painters since Jules Tavernier revealed the 'unique coastal scenery' and 'magnetism of the landscape' in 1875.<sup>3</sup> By the end of first decade of the twentieth century, Monterey was considered a 'sacred

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<sup>1</sup> Harold and Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1992), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> 'Artist Colony Awaits Its Cue for Two Casts', *San Francisco Call*, 2 July 1911.

<sup>3</sup> Shields, *Artists at Continent's End*, p. 1.

pilgrimage' for artists wishing to worship at the 'shrine of adobes, sand-dunes and cypress trees'.<sup>4</sup>

Painters who congregated here were strongly influenced by Barbizon impressionism, and artists including Francis McComas and Gottardo Piazzoni created some of the most celebrated depictions of the California coastline in this style (figure 1; p. 66).

Despite this artistic flourishing, and despite the efforts of the real estate men to tout the area's charms to the artists and writers at Coppa's restaurant, a San Francisco artistic haunt, it was not until George Sterling decided to move to Carmel that the art colony began to emerge there.<sup>5</sup> Sterling had recently found acclaim with his first poetry collection *The Testimony of the Suns*, the success of which had prompted Sterling to give up his job at his uncle's real estate office and embark on a career as a full-time poet. Although Sterling's original intention was to move to Carmel to escape the trappings of urban sociality and concentrate on his poetry, he soon attracted intellectual friends to visit his newly-built home, many of whom fell for Carmel's charms and subsequently settled there too.<sup>6</sup> He later remarked that 'some old friend from San Francisco or vicinity "dropping in"' was an almost constant occurrence.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, many of Sterling's compatriots at Coppa's restaurant went on to become Carmel visitors or residents, including Xavier Martinez, the Mexican-born painter and printmaker; novelist James Hopper; photographer Arnold Genthe; Harry Lafler, literary editor of the *Argonaut*; novelist Jack London; and Perry Newberry, a painter and writer who would go on to become Carmel mayor in 1922.

Genthe was Sterling's first notable guest, visiting in 1905 and moving to the art colony a few months later. His established reputation as a portrait photographer in San Francisco provided him the means to build a rustic bungalow on Carmel's Camino Real which was buttressed by huge

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<sup>4</sup> Kothe, 'In Old Monterey', p. 631.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, pp. 13-20. The only comprehensive biography of Sterling is Benediktsson, *George Sterling* but his archive, held at the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley, is extremely illuminating on his time in Carmel.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Orth, 'Ideality to Reality: The Founding of Carmel', *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 48 (1969), 195-210 (p. 202).

<sup>7</sup> Ida Brooks, 'Among the Artists, Writers and Poets at Carmel-by-the-Sea', *San Francisco Call*, 14 January 1906, [n.p.].

redwood trees and boasted the only cellar in the colony, designed specifically as a darkroom to process his progressive colour photography.<sup>8</sup> In this way Genthe utilized the art colony's space to move away from traditional photographic techniques and explore more progressive elements of the medium. It was here that he first started experimenting with the autochrome colour photography process. The result of this experimentation, a 1911 exhibition in San Francisco, was one of the earliest presentations of colour photography in America and included an ethereal depiction of fellow Carmel art-colonist Helen Cooke (figure 2; p. 66).<sup>9</sup> As well as his pioneering experiments with colour photography, Genthe captured the region's distinct topography, including the dramatic rocks of Point Lobos and the interplay of light and shade on Carmel Mission at sunset.

Mary Austin followed that summer to see Sterling and revisit the area she had previously explored for her recently-published novel, *Isidro*.<sup>10</sup> She too had a home erected in the area as well as a tree house nearby based on the structure of a Paiute shelter.<sup>11</sup> Austin's main residence was a cabin close to other colonist homes, but the 'wickiup' structure was erected as the writer's workspace. Based on the idea of a 'sacred shelter' and the architectural features of Native American dwellings, three Monterey pines supported a platform which Austin accessed each morning via a wooden ladder.<sup>12</sup> During her tenure as one of Carmel's central artistic personalities, Austin helped organize a community theatre, continued to explore the surrounding landscape and its non-Anglo residents, and produced an extensive collection of novels, essays and short stories.

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<sup>8</sup> Shields, *Artists at Continent's End*, p. 182. Born in Germany, Genthe moved to California to be a tutor for an American family. He taught himself photography wandering the streets of San Francisco and soon built up a solid reputation. After visiting close friend Sterling in Carmel he decided to move there in 1905. He was, however, in San Francisco at the time of the 1906 earthquake and his photographs of the ensuing devastation are some of his most famous. Alissandra Dramov, *Carmel-by-the-Sea, The Early Years (1903-1913): An Overview of the History of the Carmel Mission, the Monterey Peninsula, and the First Decade of the Bohemian Artists' and Writers' Colony* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2012), pp. 141-42. Google ebook.

<sup>9</sup> John Wood, *The Art of the Autochrome: The Birth of Color Photography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), p. 158. Helen Cooke was the daughter of another Carmel colonist, Grace MacGowan Cooke, who had set up home in the colony in 1908. Cooke married Harry Leon Wilson, a writer and Carmel colonist twenty-eight years her senior, and lived with him in the Carmel home he had built and dubbed Ocean Home. Dramov, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> Shields, p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> Bostick, *Carmel at Work and Play*, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Augusta Fink, *Monterey: The Presence of the Past* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1972), p. 241.



Carmel writer Ida Brooks presented an inventory of the colony's residents in 1906 article for the *San Francisco Call*:

George Sterling, poet and a Bohemian; Chris Jorgensen, artist and enthusiast; Sydney Yard, artist; Arnold Genthe, artist-photographer; Mary Austin, author; Mabel Gray Lachmund, musician; Mrs Frank H. Powers, artist; Frederick S. Samuels, artist and Bohemian Club man; Willis Davis, president of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art; Miss [Mary DeNeale] Morgan and Miss [Maren] Froelich, artists; Miss Elise [*sic*] Allen, at one time a member of the faculty of Wellesley College and afterward on the staff of *Harper's Magazine*, now retired to private life.<sup>13</sup>

Brooks' list indicates both the popularity of Carmel by this point and the diversity of its participants in both nationality and artistic persuasion. If Brooks had written the article three months later she could have included many more names as other art-colonists arrived in the wake of the earthquake which savaged San Francisco in April 1906 and left many of the city's artistic inhabitants destitute.<sup>14</sup> Hopper, a writer and journalist, came to the art colony after extensively reporting on the earthquake for newspapers and magazines.<sup>15</sup>

Of those who visited the colony sporadically, London is the most significant, not only in terms of his lasting legacy as a major writer of the early twentieth century, but also because, in spite of his relatively short time in Carmel, he is widely credited as one of the founders and central personalities of the art colony. In a 1928 poem entitled 'Three at Carmel', Austin reminisces about being 'low on the foreshore, Jack London and Sterling | and I together'.<sup>16</sup> Their close association at the colony is reinforced by a photograph of these three along with Hopper snapped on

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<sup>13</sup> Brooks, 'Among the Artists', [n.p.].

<sup>14</sup> Orth, 'Ideality to Reality', p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> James Hopper had been a classmate of Jack London at the University of California, Berkeley and part of the same group of San Francisco artists as Sterling. He moved to Carmel with his family in 1906 and continued to publish articles and fiction stories in mainstream publications. He was very athletic and known for his love of swimming in Carmel Bay, particularly out to a rock which came to be dubbed 'Hopper's Rock'. Dramov, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, pp. 142-43.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Austin, 'Three at Carmel', *Saturday Review of Literature*, 5 (1928), 165.

Carmel beach by fellow colonist Genthe (figure 3; p. 67). The diverse occupations of these art-colonists highlight Carmel's aesthetic inclusivity: a poet, journalist, novelist, nature writer and photographer who found camaraderie and artistic inspiration in the colony milieu.

This beach came to hold a central place in the social side of life at the Carmel colony, as the setting for the 'legendary' beach parties where colonists harvested abalone, sang songs and generally enjoyed the revelry and camaraderie of colony life. Of one such event, Genthe recalled in his autobiography:

George Sterling [...] had climbed to the top of the cliff in his bathing trunks. Somewhere or other he had procured a trident and he was standing silhouetted against the sky while Jimmy Hopper was taking his picture. This was too frivolous for Mary [Austin] who was gazing at the setting sun. [...] Jack] London was standing with a fork in hand, having just disposed of an abalone steak. Taking a look around which included both Mary and the horizon, he exclaimed, 'Hell! I say this sunset has guts!'<sup>17</sup>

The art colony at Taos had originally been a visual arts centre, following the visit by painters Bert Geer Phillips and Ernest Blumenschein in 1898. The two painters had trained in New York but, feeling stifled by the influence of European art on American painters, were *en route* to Mexico when they broke the fateful wagon wheel in the incident with which I opened this thesis. Blumenschein headed into Taos and immediately praised its charms:

No artist had ever recorded the New Mexico I was now seeing. No writer had ever written down the smell of this air or the feel of that morning's sky. I was receiving under rather painful circumstances, the first great unforgettable inspiration of my life. My destiny was being decided as I squirmed and cursed while urging the bronco through those many miles of waves of Sagebrush. [...] The color, the effective character of the landscape, the drama of the vast spaces, the superb beauty and serenity of the hills, stirred me deeply. I realized I

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<sup>17</sup> Genthe, *As I Remember*, p. 75.

was getting my impressions from nature, seeing it for the first time with my own eyes, uninfluenced by the art of any man.<sup>18</sup>

The artists stayed and were quickly joined by other artists whom together would become the Taos Society of Artists. Along with Blumenschein and Phillips, this commercial collective included Oscar Berninghaus, Walter Ufer, E. Irving Couse, Herbert Dunton and Victor Higgins.<sup>19</sup> This early cohort to the Taos art colony were traditionalists, stylistically speaking, and created many paintings of the landscape and non-Anglo cultures in the manner of 'traditional western paintings'.<sup>20</sup> The popularity of this style was fuelled by market demand, particularly the financial support of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway who purchased many of these works to feature in their promotional materials.<sup>21</sup> By the early 1920s these early colonist painters were making such a good living from such pieces that they were 'not interested in experiments' and showed only 'an occasional grasp of how painting could become more than literal description'.<sup>22</sup>

However, it was the arrival of writer and salon hostess Mabel Dodge Luhan which led to the presence of a more diverse group of art-colonists. Luhan had established herself as an arts patron and hostess of successful intellectual salons. Her Florentine villa played host to a wealth of European and American artists and writers while later, in her Greenwich Village home, she hosted a successful salon for the era's progressive and radical thinkers and artists. But by 1916 she had grown disillusioned by these scenes and so responded enthusiastically when her third husband, the artist Maurice Sterne, bid her to join him in New Mexico to 'Save the Indians!'.<sup>23</sup> There she bought a twelve-acre piece of land, built a Pueblo-style mansion called Los Gallos (in honour of the ceramic chickens which adorned the roof), divorced Sterne and married a local Native American whilst

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<sup>18</sup> Laura M. Bickerstaff, *Pioneer Artists of Taos* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co. 1983), p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> White, *Taos Society of Artists*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>20</sup> Keith L. Bryant, 'The Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway and the Development of the Taos and Santa Fe Art Colonies', *Western Historical Quarterly* 9 (1978), pp. 437-53.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Van Deren Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe: The Artist's Environment, 1882-1942* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1963), pp. 60-61.

<sup>23</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Intimate Memories: Movers and Shakers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936), p. 296. All subsequent references are to this edition.

simultaneously playing host to numerous writers, artists and intellectuals.<sup>24</sup> Here, she proclaimed, was 'the first time in my life I heard the world singing in the same key in which my life inside me had sometimes lifted and poured itself out'.<sup>25</sup>

Willard 'Spud' Johnson, poet and editor of satirical magazine *Laughing Horse*, set up home in Taos as Luhan's secretary in 1927, after dividing his time between the Santa Fe and Taos colonies for many years.<sup>26</sup> Johnson had started this small literary journal with two classmates at the University of California, Berkeley but by 1923 it had been relinquished to Johnson alone with the epigraph that *Laughing Horse* would now 'be stabled in Santa Fe, New Mexico'. Of the decision, Johnson recalled:

I 'inherited' the magazine and converted it into a journal of, by and for New Mexicans.

Unearthing a Navajo legend about the sungod riding a turquoise horse with 'a joyous neigh', it seemed a natural transition to keep the title (which had proved wonderfully rememberable) and to change its nature to suit the new environment.<sup>27</sup>

Whether Johnson intended the contribution of 'New Mexicans' to mean the region's indigenous inhabitants is unclear in this passage, but he later credited many Anglo-American participants in the Santa Fe and Taos colonies as important contributors, including Austin, Luhan, Witter Bynner, Andrew Dasburg, Lynn Riggs, Alice Corbin, Haniel Long, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, Paul Horgan, Carl Sandburg and D. H. Lawrence, whose 'obscene' letter caused a scandal in its fourth issue.

Lawrence was one of Luhan's most renowned guests and purchased one of her properties: he exchanged his manuscript for *Sons and Lovers* for a small ranch which he dubbed Lobo Ranch and which later became known as Kiowa Ranch.<sup>28</sup> Lawrence had first visited in 1922 with his wife Frieda

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<sup>24</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Intimate Memories: Edge of Taos Desert, An Escape to Reality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), p. 32. All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>26</sup> Spud Johnson had arrived in Santa Fe in 1922 to work as Witter Bynner's secretary, but also came as his lover. After an acrimonious parting he set up home in the Taos, purchasing a small house which formed part of Luhan's estate. From here Johnson continued to print *Laughing Horse* magazine, a publication he had begun during his university days in Berkeley, as well as poems gathered for the 1935 collection *Horizontal Yellow*. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, pp. 103-16.

<sup>27</sup> Spud Johnson, 'The Laughing Horse', *New Mexico Quarterly* 21 (1951), p. 165.

<sup>28</sup> The original name referenced the ranch's situation on Lobo Mountain but Lawrence decided to change it to Kiowa in honour of the Native American trail that it intersected. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 92.

and the couple returned in 1924 with their friend, the painter Dorothy Brett. A third stay in New Mexico, spending the summer of 1925 at the Kiowa Ranch, turned out to be Lawrence's last due to his untimely death in 1930.<sup>29</sup> As well as the important writing which came out of his sojourns in Taos, many art-colonists published recollections of their time with Lawrence.<sup>30</sup>

Luhan's guests also led to a diversification of Taos colony painters. When Marsden Hartley visited the Taos colony in 1918 he disparaged earlier painters of the Santa Fe and Taos colonies, saying that 'not one of them goes further than badly digested impressionism'.<sup>31</sup> Moving away from the style of the original Taos Society of Artists, figures like Dasburg and Nicolai Fechin brought elements of expressionism and modernism to the aesthetically experimental milieu, artistic genres also being explored by the colony's novelists, dramatists and poets. For Luhan, the manner or approach to art was not requisite for being part of the art colony but was instead based on a 'mysterious gravitation' to the place:

They looked like other people but they were a little different from the horde. They had a deeper awareness, more capacity, a larger dimension. Potentiality. They were greater. Because of their own inner life they were able to breathe upon the latent life in the Valley so that it brimmed and gave them what they had come here for, an enhancement of power and beauty, delicate and pristine. So there was an exchange between people and environment, each contributed to the other. [...] Some got it through the eye, some through the ear, and others through the pores of the skin.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Brett was an English painter who became acquainted with Lawrence through the Bloomsbury Group. After travelling to New Mexico with the Lawrences she remained there for the rest of her life, finding acclaim for her paintings of Native American life. Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe*, p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> The short stories 'St Mawr', 'The Princess' and 'The Woman who Rode Away' were all developed and set in New Mexico. Lawrence's time in Taos is documented in Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Lorenzo in Taos* (London: Martin Secker, 1933); Witter Bynner, *Journeys with Genius: Recollections and Reflections concerning the D. H. Lawrences* (London: Peter Nevill, 1953); Dorothy Brett, *Lawrence and Brett: A Friendship* (London: Martin Secker, 1933); Knud Merrild, *A Poet and Two Painters: A Memoir of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Routledge, 1938).

<sup>31</sup> Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe*, p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> Luhan, 'Paso Por Aqui', p. 137.

Santa Fe welcomed a similarly diverse group of art-colonists, many of whom arrived on the invitation of Corbin. Corbin had acquired a substantial group of intellectual acquaintances during her time as co-editor of *Poetry* magazine in Chicago, spending four years cultivating relationships with poets before her move to New Mexico.<sup>33</sup> Her relocation was prompted by an affliction of tuberculosis, but she soon became enamoured with Santa Fe for more than its clean air and temperate climate. After a spell staying in the popular Sunmount Sanatorium, Corbin and her husband, the artist William Penhallow Henderson, and their young daughter moved to an adobe house on Telephone Road. Displeased with the Anglicized name of her new residence, Corbin successfully petitioned to revert to the street's original name. The Corbin-Henderson home, now situated on the more 'authentically' named Camino del Monte Sol, welcomed numerous visiting artists and writers: in the following years prominent writers including Bynner, Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay and Harriet Monroe all heeded Corbin's entreaties to visit.<sup>34</sup> Many stayed and established their homes in the town while many others made the trip to visit, forming a lively artist colony.

Corbin was central to many colony activities including the establishment of a colonist-run printing press, Writers' Editions, and an informal but productive poetry group dubbed The Rabble (histories of both neglected groups are brought to light in Chapter Two) and produced a wealth of poetry influenced by the region. The typical colony interest in Native American culture is evident in much of her work, both poetry and pieces written for contemporary publications. In an article for *Theatre Arts Monthly*, for instance, she outlines her view that art, drama and religious ritual interconnect in Native American ceremonial dances. These connections, places where seemingly different elements coalesce, provide an evocative metaphor for the colony milieu as well as for the artistic experiments being conducted by its members. Corbin explains that these dances are visual

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<sup>33</sup> The only published biography of Corbin is T. M. Pearce, *Alice Corbin Henderson* (Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn, 1969) but Natasha Marie Sinutko consulted much of Corbin's archive for her dissertation *Translating the Other: The Life and Work of Alice Corbin Henderson in Santa Fe, 1916-1949* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1994); fellow art-colonists also contributed to 'Alice Corbin: An Appreciation', *The New Mexico Quarterly*, 19 (1949), 35-79.

<sup>34</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 40.

expressions of 'man's relation to the earth, and to the fructifying principles of sun, wind, and water' and represent 'a perfect art form' borne of 'centuries of tradition, an expression of an esthetic [*sic*] philosophy of life which flows into outward symbols and gestures'.<sup>35</sup> The Snake Dances performed by southwestern Native Americans were a particularly popular example of this interest, combining the model for artistic expression extolled by Corbin with aspects of spectacular 'exotic' display: dancers with painted faces and carrying ceremonial feathers conduct the dance with rattlesnakes hanging from their hands and from their mouths.<sup>36</sup>

Corbin's husband rendered the scene on canvas in *Walpi Snake Dance* (figure 4; p. 67), incorporating all of these arresting visual aspects but notably rearranged by the painter. It is such formations of spectacle to which Lawrence alludes in an article written about his trip to a similar ceremony:

The southwest is the great playground of the White American. And the Indian, [...] he's a wonderful live toy to play with. [...] Wonderful, really, hopping around with a snake in his mouth. Lots of fun! Oh, the wild west is lots of fun: The Land of Enchantment. Like being right inside the circus-ring! Lots of sand, and painted savages jabbering and snakes and all that.<sup>37</sup>

Lawrence's perception of his peers' problematic engagement with Native American culture is astute, noting the extent to which colonists fuelled the prior rhetoric of enchantment that I discussed in the introduction. However, it is also imperative to address Lawrence's extremely problematic references to Native Americans here. The racist and racist discourses evident in this quotation are also exemplars of colonist rhetoric and are as troubling as the gaze imposed by colonists that Lawrence so readily denounces.

Some colonist endeavours to help the 'plight' of Native Americans were not only sympathetic but genuinely useful in improving Native American rights. In 1922, participants in the

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<sup>35</sup> Alice Corbin, 'Dance Rituals of the Pueblo Indians', *Theater Arts Magazine* 7 (1923), pp. 109-10 (p. 109).

<sup>36</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 169; Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Just Back from the Snake-Dance – Tired Out', *Laughing Horse* (1924), pp. 26-29 (p. 28)

Santa Fe and Taos colonies formed 'The Artists and Writers Protest' in opposition to the Indian Lands Bill, more commonly known as the Bursum Bill, which threatened the repossession of Pueblo lands. Senator Bursum's proposition that land rights be endowed to any non-Native American squatting on land before 1902 was met by avid protests from art-colonists. Their efforts proved successful: the bill was defeated and Pueblo lands remained in Pueblo possession.<sup>38</sup> Adding their celebrity heft to the opposition campaign were colonists including Lawrence, Sandburg and Lindsay, while Santa Fe writer and ethnographer Oliver La Farge praised their efforts for what 'seemed at first a small thing with a large name, [...] a local group to fight a local Bill [...] proved] competent and [...] found support throughout the country'.<sup>39</sup> Another Santa Fe colonist, Erna Fergusson, outlines the myriad efforts of Santa Fe and Taos colony writers:

Alice Corbin Henderson and Elsie [Elizabeth Shepley] Sergeant appeared simultaneously in the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. [...] Witter Bynner wrote for the *Outlook*. Harvey Fergusson, then a newspaper man in Washington, wrote for a capital paper. Mary Austen [*sic*] lent her prestige as the final authority on the Indians.<sup>40</sup>

As in Taos, the art colony at Santa Fe incorporated a similarly strong painting element and a similar shift from traditionalism to more progressive artistic modes. Academically trained painters including Sheldon Parsons and Carlos Vierra were some of the first Anglo artists to settle in Santa Fe but the colony's artistic output increasingly incorporated elements of expressionism and modernism, particularly after the formation of Los Cincos Pintores in 1926, a group consisting of the artists Freemont Ellis, Jozef Bakos, Will Shuster, Willard Nash and Walter Murk, and described by historian of art Steve Shipp as 'five modernist artists seeking wider recognition of their work'.<sup>41</sup> Yet visual art was only one element of this diverse group of art-colonists. Leaving Carmel for a sojourn in Europe, for instance, Austin settled in Santa Fe in 1924. Austin had been visiting the New Mexican art

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<sup>38</sup> Sascha T. Scott, *A Strange Mixture: The Art and Politics of Painting Pueblo Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), pp. 92-94.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in McNickle, *Indian Man*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>40</sup> Erna Fergusson, 'Crusade from Santa Fe', *North American Review* 242 (1937), pp. 377-79 (pp. 378-79).

<sup>41</sup> Shipp, *American Art Colonies*, p. 97.



colonies since 1918, conducting research into Native American and Hispanic cultures for numerous novels and editorials, helping to organize a community theatre based on her similar efforts at the Carmel art colony, and recuperating from a series of psychological ailments at Luhan's in Taos. When she moved permanently to Santa Fe, Austin continued to fight for Native American rights and erected a faithful adobe house which she called Casa Querida, or Beloved House.<sup>42</sup>

Poet Bynner built a similar home in Santa Fe, becoming an important permanent member of the Santa Fe art colony after initially visiting the town on a lecture tour in 1922.<sup>43</sup> Ansel Adams noted the joy of discovering 'that serious artists could have this much fun' when he attended Bynner's legendary parties on his first visit to the New Mexican colonies, while Ruth Laughlin Alexander later recalled Bynner's artistic contribution the colony milieu, begun on his arrival in the region:

The first memory is of the night you read your Chinese poems at Sunmount in February, 1922. [...] We were impressed with the beauty of your poems, your resonant voice and dramatic presentation, your wit, keen mind and dignity. [...] At that time everyone quoted the lines, 'If Witter comes, can spring be far behind?' Witter came and the spring has been long and fruitful.<sup>44</sup>

Arriving in Santa Fe a noted sinologist as well as a respected poet, Bynner saw an exotic antiquity in the southwest reminiscent of China.<sup>45</sup> His sprawling adobe home was continually extended over many years in the art colony, during which time Bynner immersed himself in the sociality enjoyed between colonists and in intercultural relations with New Mexico's Native American and Spanish-speaking peoples. Indeed, often for Bynner the two overlapped. He regularly led the Santa Fe Fiesta parade, the annual event endorsed by colonists to promote local regional cultures, embracing the festivity by costuming himself in a giant nappy and drinking from a baby's bottle full of liquor.<sup>46</sup>

Bynner's extroverted character is remarked on by many who became associated with the art colony

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<sup>42</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Sharyn Rohlfen Udall, *Santa Fe Art Colony, 1900-1942* (Santa Fe: Gerald Peters Gallery, 1987), p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Ruth Laughlin Alexander, 'On Hal's Birthday', *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 12 August 1956, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies*, pp. 185-86.

<sup>46</sup> Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 35.

during this period. Novelist Harvey Fergusson credits him with a 'truly marvellous capacity' for socializing, while both Johnson and playwright Riggs were initially drawn to the southwest by the charismatic Bynner.<sup>47</sup> Riggs was a young aspirant when Bynner suggested he come to Santa Fe to recover from physical and psychological ailments. His time in Santa Fe represented a period of fervent artistic output, producing an abundance of poems and plays, as well as benefitting from socializing with more established artists in The Rabble group.

Johnson and Bynner played host to the Lawrences when Luhan arrived on their doorstep with the visiting pair in September 1922. They had been *en route* to Taos but, having got too late to safely navigate the treacherous path, Luhan decided to call on Bynner's hospitality. This sparked the friendship between Bynner and Lawrence about which Luhan subsequently grew jealous. After the foursome travelled to Mexico together the following spring, rumours abounded that Luhan's scorn at not being invited to join them led her to poison Johnson against Bynner and lure him to Taos, where he moved in 1927.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Diary, 27 August 1922, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1. Born in Albuquerque, Fergusson moved east for college and subsequent jobs in journalism. However, he continued to spend much of his time in New Mexico during the 1920s, frequenting both the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies. Here he socialized with Luhan, Austin, and Bynner and even became infatuated with Corbin and Henderson's daughter Alice. The southwest became his enduring literary theme, particularly in the *Followers of the Sun* trilogy comprised of *Blood of the Conquerors* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1921), *Wolf Song* (London: Knopf, 1927) and *In Those Days* (New York: Knopf, 1929). An Oklahoma native, Riggs had been drawn to the southwest by the charismatic Bynner whom he met as a student at the University of Oklahoma when Bynner was visiting on a lecture tour in 1922. He remained in Santa Fe until moving to New York in 1926. During his time at the art colony he produced a wealth of poetry and plays. His legacy was secured by the musical *Oklahoma*, an adaptation of his play *Green Grow the Lilacs* (New York: Samuel French, 1931). Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies*, pp. 190-92; Phyllis Cole Braunlich, *Haunted by Home: The Life and Letters of Lynn Riggs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). Google ebook.

<sup>48</sup> Kraft, p. lviii.

**Figure 1:** Francis McComas, *Monterey Oaks*, 1903, watercolour



**Figure 2:** Arnold Genthe, *Helen Cooke in a Field of Poppies*, 1907, colour autochrome print



**Figure 3:** Austin, Sterling, London and Hopper on the beach in Carmel



**Figure 4:** William Penhallow Henderson, *Walpi Snake Dance*, c. 1920, oil on canvas



## Western colonies in scholarship

The question of what, then, defines an art colony is an important one, and this is the question to which I want now to turn. The diversity of participants, movements, and patterns of behaviour to which I have alluded raise various questions that are central to this thesis. If colonies' participants were perpetually moving, how can these sites be defined as colonies; and with those present varying so substantially, how can colonies be understood as cohesive entities? We might ask whether they should be collectively labelled at all. The scholarship concerning these art colonies has been inhibited by these central queries, tending to shy away from aspects of diversity, and presenting partial and descriptive overviews of these places in lieu of comparison or analysis. Southwestern cultural histories, conversely, explore Anglo-American experiences in these areas but stop short of examining the specific milieu of the art colony. In this thesis I seek to pull these areas of criticism closer together and bridge the gap between the cultural history and aesthetic criticism of the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos.

The scholarship surrounding Carmel is indicative. Focusing solely on the art colony at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Franklin Walker sheds light on art and artists in *The Seacoast of Bohemia*. By concentrating on a single western art colony, Walker can present a great deal of detail about Carmel's popularity and development. The value of the study lies in its focus on the backgrounds of those present and its illustration of the experiences and characteristics that artists brought with them to the colony. Falling prey to a familiar problem of definition (artists are described as inhabiting the 'seacoast of bohemia', an area encompassing both 'art colony' and 'bohemia') Walker nonetheless illustrates how, despite the detachment afforded by these places, artists were not willing or able to leave everything behind. Indeed, what is taken and what is discarded when one leaves home is an important facet in understanding western art colonies. Walker does not fully explore the relationship between artists' prior and colony experiences, but by including information on Carmel art-colonists' lives and works before their time at the colony, Walker's work paves the way for my analysis of the ways in which artists and writers utilized the colony space to confront and

explore personal anxieties. Walker's study of Carmel is a pleasing collection of details which helps bring the colony's central characters to life.

Scott Shields includes details of Carmel's literary personalities in his overview of painters in California. *Artists at Continent's End* ably outlines common attractions concerning the beauty and tranquillity of the location, opportunities for artistic subjects in the natural surroundings, and the 'proximity of friends'.<sup>49</sup> It traces these elements through an array of pictorial interpretations of the region, illuminating the artistic canon of Monterey's painters' colony, and concludes with a pleasant overview of Carmel's literati. The book's visual focus necessarily relegates discussions of Carmel as well as of the social aspects of these colonies. Reference to the appealing 'proximity of friends' emphasizes this approach: the phrase is both generalizing and reductive compared to the vigorous explorations of interpersonal dynamics presented in this thesis as a crucial tenet in the formation and success of these art colonies. Like works exploring the art colonies in New Mexico, Shields foregrounds the attraction of landscape, and specifically the 'harmonious synthesis of nature and humanity' which was 'an ideal for many artists'.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, the timespan of Shields' study means that his account of artists in California ends just as the Carmel art colony is beginning to flourish. George Sterling's move to Carmel in 1905 heralded many other artists' and writers' relocation or visits to the art colony, but unfortunately Shields ends his study in 1907. He does, however, address common issues of terminology that dog any account of art colonies. Describing the literary contingent of Carmel and the painters of Monterey collectively, he asserts:

Although cumulatively these creative persons have frequently been labeled a colony, the nature of their interactions makes the label imprecise. Their associations were in fact both social and professional but without a formally organized society, experimental commune, or specified 'school' of painting.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Shields, pp. 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

What negates classification as a colony for Shields is, interestingly, precisely the reasoning for my conviction that the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos constitute a certain *kind* of art colony. Shields correctly identifies the absence of features distinguishing other types of art colony, such as the Barbizon ‘school’ of impressionism or the Helicon Hall colony’s communal ethos, but this merely means that Carmel adheres to a different art colony model rather than signalling its exclusion from the art colony tradition. Shields’ remarks elucidate the need for terminological rigour in order to adequately and accurately understand these complex artistic environments.

Turning to the study of the Taos colony, Mabel Dodge Luhan’s life has garnered a number of biographies which utilize writing by and about her, including previously restricted sections of her archive.<sup>52</sup> Lois Rudnick presents an eloquent presentation and interpretation of this material in *The Suppressed Memoirs of Mabel Dodge Luhan* but her earlier biography of Luhan is particularly informative for my discussion of the art colony. In *Utopian Vistas: The Mabel Dodge Luhan House and American Counterculture* Rudnick traces the successive incarnations of the pueblo-style adobe mansion that Luhan built, not only painting a vivid picture of the vibrant life of the house but also commenting on its relationship to twentieth-century American culture. Her study is part anecdotal and part scholarly, moving beyond descriptive discussion to a consideration of the complex dynamics present at these art colonies. Rudnick’s analysis of Luhan’s home reinforces her important role in the life of the Taos art colony and highlights how many of her guests experienced a sense of home whilst being very much away in the southwest. *Utopian Vistas* is subsequently a valuable resource to my own study and paves the way for the broader analysis conducted in this thesis. I think that its use is limited, however, because the experiences of Luhan’s guests remain tangential. Although visitors and neighbouring artists are discussed in the book, its biographical nature relegates them to marginal figures. My analysis is underpinned by the idea that understanding of these places

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<sup>52</sup> Winifred L. Frazer, *Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boston: Twayne, 1984); Jane Nelson, *Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boise, ID: Boise State University, 1982); Emily Hann, *Mabel: A Biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977).

can only be gained through exploration of the interactions between the colony's range of participants.

Santa Fe and Taos have garnered more critical attention than has Carmel, but the usefulness of this literature to my study is limited by two organizing frameworks: the two art colonies are often discussed as a single site while simultaneously divided along generic lines. Arrell Morgan Gibson and Van Deren Coke focus solely on painters while Lynn Cline and Marta Weigle and Kyle Fiore explore the literary contingent of these New Mexican art colonies.<sup>53</sup> In so doing these works divide art colonies into more manageable topics. They attest to the presence of different types of artists, but their restrictions on material mean a commentary on art colonies as shared spaces is notably absent. Their discussion of Santa Fe and Taos as a single unified space augments rather than diminishes this issue as it reinforces a sense of standardization in these art colonies. My argument intervenes in this critical field by presenting Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as heterogeneous sites which are connected through shared patterns of behaviour. I strive to illuminate that existing critical work fails to acknowledge the full complexity of the situation at western art colonies.

Gibson is forthright in his assertion of his project's descriptive tenor in *Santa Fe and Taos: Age of the Muses*: 'This is not an analytical commentary or evaluation of the art, literature, music, dance, and drama produced in the Santa Fe and Taos colonies', he proclaims, adding that he 'shun[s] the esoteric realm of art and literary judgement and criticism'.<sup>54</sup> Factual accounts such as this are extremely useful contributions to a distinctly underexplored field. By listing a few of the various artistic persuasions represented in the Santa Fe and Taos colonies, Gibson indicates the vast array of material with which any commentator on this scene needs to engage. The adept collection of materials in works such as Gibson's thus provides a foundation for the critical and analytical work undertaken in this thesis. Gibson accurately highlights the distinction between descriptive and evaluative accounts of these art colonies. These were immensely interesting, complex, influential

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<sup>53</sup> Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Art Colonies*; Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe*; Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*; Marta Weigle and Kyle Fiore, *Santa Fe and Taos: The Writer's Era, 1916-1941* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> Gibson, p. xiii.



hubs of artistic activity, worthy of attention through a range of approaches. By sticking firmly to empirical details, works like Gibson's can provide a far more detailed insight into these places than an evaluative project like mine can provide. Engagement with theoretical criticism allows me to engage with these places in new ways, but this comes at the expense of laboriously outlining the myriad people, activities, comings and goings that combined to produce the lively art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos.

Sharon Udall presents an illuminating discussion of Santa Fe painters in *The Santa Fe Art Colony, 1900-1942* but, as an exhibition catalogue, her essay is necessarily brief and understandably avoids critical analysis. She ably provides an overview of dates, participants and the ways in which these painters sustained an income at the colony. She utilizes maximum scope within this specific subject area. Her work covers the spectrum of visual artistic activities including painting, printmaking, mural painting and artistic education. Her central question is an interesting one, and highlights the lack of synthesized accounts or more in-depth explorations of these vibrant artistic hubs. She asks, 'What was it like to be a professional painter in Santa Fe in the first half of the twentieth century?'.<sup>55</sup> The work accompanied an exhibition on Santa Fe painters, thus Udall's essay is of limited scope: restricted to painters without information on anything about the life of the colony beyond how to sell art. This is, of course, a very interesting and illuminating facet of colonist experiences, but is only of partial use to my study. Figures who are central to my explorations – those who were most active in colony activities and socializing with other colonists – receive only passing reference. Udall mentions, for instance, that Mary Austin's home Casa Querida was the location for the Arsuna School of Art which opened in 1937. Such a titbit adds to understandings of colonists' involvement with myriad artistic endeavours concerning their colony peers, but Udall's emphasis and subject matter negate any further exploration of such examples.

Kay Aiken Reeve chooses consciously inclusive terminology in her study of Santa Fe and Taos, classing these sites (collectively) as an 'American cultural center'. Her choice of subject matter,

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<sup>55</sup> Udall, *Santa Fe Art Colony*, p. 11.

indicated by her choice of terms, expands the use of artistic persuasion as an organizing framework which characterizes most works on New Mexican art colonies. Reeve presents interesting accounts of the New Mexican landscape and environment, and its Native American and Hispanic populations, but, notably, without reference to the artistic activities of Santa Fe and Taos colonists. Indeed, her focus is less on art at all than on the attraction of the region to these varied personalities. *Santa Fe and Taos: An American Cultural Center* is a concise overview of the colonies' development and appeal. At only fifty pages, the work succeeds as a brief introduction to these multifaceted sites. Reeve summarizes some weighty topics like the specificity of the southwestern landscape and the ethnic makeup of the region but, in so doing, she avoids deeper conversations about such complex themes. Although the book ably investigates the appeal of Santa Fe and Taos to Anglo artists and writers, Reeve's approach negates explorations about what was going on in these places. Reeve articulates the difficulty of theorizing these art colonies, and the range of material and resources involved in any systematic account of art colony experiences: obstacles that I have similarly had to navigate in my own evaluation of western art colonies. She asserts: 'Despite this vast volume of source material, or perhaps because of it, a completely satisfactory explanation as to why the center flourished so heartily between 1900 and 1940 has been elusive.'<sup>56</sup> However, by succinctly organizing a range of ideas, Reeve's work paves the way for the critical investigations of this thesis. Reeves admits that her subject matter 'deserves a more complete analysis than it has yet received', particularly in terms of illuminating the appeal of Santa Fe and Taos, as well as of the entire American west and the climate of early-twentieth-century America. I agree with this sentiment, and contribute to this aspiration with this thesis. But I argue that other facets should be added to Reeve's list, including how groups work, what artists seek in terms of personal and artistic fulfilment, how collaborative activity developed in these places and how such an atmosphere affected aesthetic interpretations of the region.

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<sup>56</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 2.

Coke's work on the painters of New Mexican colonies opens with an evocative description of regional distinctiveness:

New Mexico is a different country. [... Artists] were drawn at first by the romantic concept of recording what was thought of as a dying race and the grandeur of an austere landscape. Their prevailing idealistic concepts were only partially altered by the reality they discovered.<sup>57</sup>

This is a natural starting point for a study of painters who consistently and emotively rendered southwestern landscapes onto canvas. Coke focuses on the same two central tenets as Reeve: the landscape and the presence of non-Anglo cultures. In this way Coke's study aligns with other works on the Santa Fe and Taos colonies as well as works focusing on the presence of Anglo-Americans in the southwest that explore artists' engagement with the land. None, however, have investigated the engagement of artists with each other: a limitation of the field which is addressed by this thesis. Decisions over figures to include in this study have been partly based on their reactions to landscape, but has also considered completely different aspects like interpersonal dynamics and how artists relate to each other. What is missing from existing works in the field is an acknowledgement of what artists gained through affiliation with these art colonies, and why artists chose to be part of these groups instead of experiencing this appealing region alone.

Cline's *Literary Pilgrims* piques the interest of readers and would-be tourists to the southwest. Her discussion of what she calls the 'literary colonies' of Santa Fe and Taos concludes with walking and driving tours that allow regional visitors to retrace the footsteps of the figures discussed in her book. Although she outlines some of the attractions of this regional setting, briefly delineating New Mexico's Pueblo Indian and Hispanic literary traditions, Cline's primary objective is to sketch out influential figures at the New Mexican art colonies. This biographical approach is executed through a succession of chapters which each focus on a different writer. Cline devotes room to general biographical details as well as to interesting incidents in figures' literary careers,

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<sup>57</sup> Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe*, p. 9.

regardless of whether they occurred at the art colony. In this way, Cline's focus remains on individual figures rather than the art colony itself. This approach aligns *Literary Pilgrims* with an existing field of scholarship on art colonies which is dogged by vague terminology. She asserts that Santa Fe and Taos are just two of the many 'acclaimed art colonies' which gained popularity in the early decades of the twentieth century, describing them as identical counterparts to Provincetown in Massachusetts, the Carmel art colony, and Woodstock in upstate New York.<sup>58</sup> In my opinion, however, Cline's choice of equivalents reinforces the need for critical rigour in terms of understanding the nuances of different *kinds* of art colony. Provincetown is an exemplar of the Barbizon-styled impressionist art colony that dotted the New England landscape in the latter half of the nineteenth century (and which is outlined in the following section of this chapter) while Woodstock was an intentionally organized artistic community which closely monitored and managed its membership through a formal application process, quite at odds with the diverse and unscripted movements of art-colonists moving into and out of the western colony milieu.<sup>59</sup> Carmel, of course, is definable alongside Santa Fe and Taos in my conceptualization, but for reasons that I outline throughout this thesis rather than merely because they all hosted a substantial concentration of artists.

As with similar works in the field, Cline limits her subject matter along generic lines and has employed a subjective rationale to choose the figures included. However, these reasons remain unexplained and unclear. Cline's attention to biographical detail and her commitment to accurately reflecting chronology in the sequence of chapters (figures are discussed in the order in which they first visited New Mexico) provide a useful and interesting introduction to these people, but *Literary Pilgrims* lacks acknowledgement of variations in colonists' experiences which form the basis of my endeavour to approach these places with greater critical scrutiny. Variations in experience are not

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<sup>58</sup> Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Woodstock art colony see Karal Ann Marling, ed., *Woodstock: An American Art Colony, 1902-1977* (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College Art Gallery, 1977).

problematic *per se*, as I show in this thesis, but this diversity needs to be addressed and critically navigated.

Restricting analysis to a chosen colony or medium highlights the wealth of material involved in explorations of the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos. Since the analysis of art colonies cannot solely rely on the paintings produced in an art colony, as is the case when examining the more common French-derived formation of the art colony, the scholar of these places must also assemble works of fiction, non-fiction and journalism as well as contemporary pieces both by and about art-colonists. The organization of disparate sources is ably demonstrated in works which assemble information about western art colonies gleaned from personal archives, contemporary newspapers, magazines and publications by colonists. This is particularly well executed by Weigle and Fiore in *Santa Fe and Taos: The Writer's Era, 1900-1940*. After early chapters outlining the social context of successive decades, Weigle and Fiore move on to provide a scrapbook of publications by and about art-colonists. They provide a glimpse into the perception of these art colonies by those present, contemporaneously and in retrospect, as well as indicating the range of publication methods employed by art-colonists. Weigle and Fiore's aim is to add writers back into the art history of these places. They assert that their work is modelled after Coke's study, outlining literary activities in the Santa Fe and Taos colonies in the same way that Coke outlines painters.<sup>60</sup> The extensive range of source material utilized and presented in the work attests to the logistical difficulties of this project, and of any attempt at synthesized discussions of these diverse artistic milieux. This organization is the writers' primary focus. The terminology employed reinforces that the work is in essence a curation project, as the 'history and ambience' of these art colonies is outlined in 'A Chronicle' before the writers move on to present two 'exhibits' comprised of a plethora of artistic ephemera ranging from articles by colonists to contemporary advertisements. *Santa Fe and Taos: The Writers' Era* is an impressively executed archival project which presents a vast amount of material, deftly collated and catalogued by Weigle and Fiore. Its volume and range constitute a

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<sup>60</sup> Weigle and Fiore, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. vii.

major contribution to the field. However, like much of this scholarship, it stays firmly in descriptive rather than analytical territory. In so doing it refrains from, but simultaneously paves the ways for, the critical explorations of the art colonies presented in this thesis.

This complexity is at the heart of my thesis. By acknowledging and exploring the full range of material associated with western art colonies, I want to contribute to a field of scholarship dominated by monographic accounts. Even works which focus on both the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies lack a comparative approach, instead presenting these singular communities as one amalgamated site. Instead of addressing the scope of art and experiences at these places by limiting my discussion, this complexity will instead reinforce my interpretations. Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos art colonies are aligned because they are similarly diverse and we must take account of their myriad people and engagements if we are to understand them fully. I identify patterns within these seemingly disparate practices in order to contribute to the current field on western art colonies and thereby re-evaluate their place within accounts of twentieth-century American art history and cultural history. By compiling fragmented accounts of these places and conducting original research of my own, I recover western art colonies as important examples of collaborative artistic endeavour and present a deeper understanding of what kind of group developed in these places: what kind of 'art colony' they were.

### **Tracing development and determining definition: the art colony tradition**

Academic studies of the art colony as a form have tended to build up a picture of the features and practices which typify such projects, particularly with regards to issues of landscape, accessibility and sociality.<sup>61</sup> Highlighting these common features, these studies trace the lineage of art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos back to the original Barbizon art colony and its influence on subsequent

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<sup>61</sup> Michael Jacobs, *The Good and Simple Life: Artist Colonies in Europe and America* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985); Nina Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe*; Steve Shipp, *American Art Colonies, 1850-1930: A Historical Guide to America's Original Art Colonies and Their Artists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996); Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemianism in America* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1933).

art colonies in Europe and the American northeast. There is, nonetheless, a lack of definition here as to what defines an art colony, with many critics conflating this form of settlement with other cultural group formations like urban bohémias, utopian experiments and modernist coteries.<sup>62</sup> Scholars in the field have grappled with issues of development and definition, and I want to turn to these now.

Michael Jacobs' *The Good and Simple Life* explores the proliferation of art colonies from their genesis in the Fontainebleau village of Barbizon. Artists studying or working in Paris began congregating in Barbizon from the mid-nineteenth century in order to experiment with contemporary styles in a relaxed atmosphere amongst their peers.<sup>63</sup> In describing Siron's, a boarding house that became popular with artists at Barbizon, Robert Louis Stevenson describes his time at the art colony and its unwritten code of behaviour which, if breached, resulted in exclusion from the group:

Theoretically, the house was open to all corners; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Parry conflates bohemian groups and art colonies, Jacobs suggests art colonies are synonymous with more utopian projects, and Lübbren fails to differentiate art colonies from modernist artistic groups.

<sup>63</sup> By the 1880s it formed a focus for a generation of artists for whom formal training at Paris art schools was no longer sufficient, and who wanted instruction in contemporary *plein air* techniques. Whereas formal training extolled the authority of historical painting and required working indoors to learn by copying the work of past masters, painting *en plein air* allowed artists to capture everyday scenes and subjects while working outdoors. Philip Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Fontainebleau', *Across The Plains: with Other Memories and Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1913; repr. New York: Cosimo, 2005), pp. 72- 94 (pp. 85-86).

Stevenson's comments suggest that colonists shared more than artistic preferences and were instead involved in a kind of collective mentality. This sense of a mystic connection with other colonists also appears in the art colonies of California and New Mexico.

The social and aesthetic practices established at Barbizon that Jacobs describes are important because they set the standard for subsequent art colonies that proliferated across Europe and America. Jacobs notes how the Barbizon's popularity led to the rapid establishment of similar art colonies in rural French villages, European locations and subsequently proliferated along similar and easily recognised lines in America.<sup>65</sup> The discussion of the art colony in *The Good and Simple Life* ends with a discussion of how Provincetown, Massachusetts echoes 'that same impulse which [...] had led artists to wander through the forest of Fontainebleau in search of a world of primitive grandeur'.<sup>66</sup>

Steve Shipp identifies the features and artistic style that American art colonies inherited from European art colony models, but refrains from analysing them. His reference guide *American Art Colonies, 1850-1930* is the only study of art colonies to focus solely on colonies in America. His emphasis on visual art reminds us that American art colonies from the 1880s onwards were often structured around the provision of instruction in painting and that their reputations were built on the popularity of paintings produced at each colony. But this also has the effect of relegating artists

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<sup>65</sup> See also Annie Cohen-Solal, *Painting American: The Rise of American Artists, Paris 1867-New York 1948* (New York: Knopf, 2001), p. 46; Brian H. Paterson and William H. Gerds, eds, *Pennsylvania Impressionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Susan G. Larkin, *The Cos Cob Art Colony: Impressionists on the Connecticut Shore* (Cos Cob, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Ulrich W. Hiesinger, *Impressionism in America: The Ten American Painters* (New York: Jordan-Volpe Gallery, 1991).

<sup>66</sup> Jacobs, *The Good and Simple Life*, p. 179. Commenting on a visit to Fontainebleau in 1828, for instance, James Fenimore Cooper observed 'We were now quite without the influence of Paris, and effectually in the provinces. The real rusticity of France, to say the truth, is very rustic!' James Fenimore Cooper, *Excursions in Switzerland* (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), p. 9. Transatlantic incarnations of Barbizon-model art colonies were readily described as American versions of European models, with historian Charles Burr Todd referring to East Hampton art colony as an 'American Barbizon [sic]', artist Helen Knowlton labelling Gloucester-Rockport the 'Brittany of America' and art critics William G. Hennessy and Frederic A. Sharf describing North Conway as an 'American counterpart to the Forest of Fontainebleau'. Charles Burr Todd, 'The American Barbizon [sic]', *Lippincott's*, 31 (1883), 321-28 (p. 321); Shipp, *American Art Colonies*, p. 38; William G. Hennessy and Frederic A. Sharf, 'North Conway Art Colony', *Antiques*, November 1963, 566-69 (p. 569).



working in other mediums to marginal positions. Willa Cather, for instance, receives no more than the following tangential reference in the description of Taos:

Howard Cook (1901-1980), noted for his illustrations and etchings, did not begin painting in oils until the mid-1940s, when he concentrated on using broad patterns and forms to depict the Indians and landscape of the desert Southwest. [...] In 1926, he was sent to Taos by the magazine *Forum* to produce woodcuts to illustrate Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. [...] Cook's landscapes evolved towards abstraction in the 1940s, and he experimented extensively with collages in the 1950s.<sup>67</sup>

By overlooking elements which fall outside of his chosen parameters, Shipp inadvertently highlights the difference between Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos and the main tradition of the art colony. All three of these art colonies are discussed in his study (although the New Mexican art colonies are amalgamated into a single site) but, as the example above illustrates, the heterogeneity of artistic work is neglected.

For all that Jacobs and Shipp are relatively concise in their definition of an art colony, their attention to classification is not characteristic of much of the scholarly field. For instance, the social aspects of these artistic circles are explored in Albert Parry's 1933 retrospective *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemianism in America*. Parry follows Jacobs' preference for focusing on artists' experiences but eschews his single focus on painters, substantially broadening the scholarly field of study in the process. Yet *Garrets and Pretenders* does not purport to be a discussion of the art colony scene; this is a history of bohemianism. In posing the question, 'What was Bohemia, anyway?' and using the terms 'bohemian' and 'art colony' interchangeably, Parry re-opens the question of what an art colony was.<sup>68</sup> Of Jacobs' quintessentially Barbizon-modelled American art colony, for instance, Parry asserts that Provincetown was 'transformed [...] into an *art colony*, thus putting New England on the *Bohemian map*'.<sup>69</sup> Such broad usage is problematic in its conflation of

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<sup>67</sup> Shipp, *American Art Colonies*, p. 114.

<sup>68</sup> Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, p. 100.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148 (my emphasis).

experiences in different kinds of artistic groups. Parry readily correlates urban and more remote locales, arguing that Greenwich Village was the 'celebrated kin and sire' of art colonies in California and New Mexico, with Carmel described as 'a piece of Greenwichery of the West', while Santa Fe and Taos are both said to be 'Greenwich Villagey'.<sup>70</sup>

The experiences of artists in Greenwich Village were, however, far from interchangeable with those congregating in Californian or New Mexican villages. There is a significant distinction between artists travelling the few streets from their apartments to the artistic haunts of Greenwich Village, short regular train rides between New York and New England, and Mabel Dodge Luhan's encumbered car ride through the New Mexican desert. Indeed, just as the French model of the art colony was replicated in the American northeast, so too was the tradition of artistic groups congregating in cities, with New York imitating Parisian café culture across the Atlantic. William Dean Howells, for instance, describes his time in Greenwich Village as being within 'a sickly colony, transplanted from the mother asphalt of Paris'.<sup>71</sup> Many of those attending western art colonies were known to frequent artistic haunts of the type Howells describes, including Pfaff's bar in New York and Coppa's restaurant in San Francisco, but the act of separation from American cities was central to their western art colony experiences. Those who resided in these cities and frequented such haunts have been argued to be inhabiting urban bohemias, a specific group formation displaying 'status quo defiance' and a 'need to [...] tear down the conventional'.<sup>72</sup> New York's Greenwich Village provided a 'full-bodied alternative to an established cultural elite' which was unnecessary for art-colonists retreating from the city in pursuit of personal improvement.<sup>73</sup> Some opportunities for 'alternative' patterns of behaviour are shared by bohemias and western art colonies, yet I think that

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 249-54.

<sup>71</sup> William Dean Howells, *Literary Friends and Acquaintances: A Personal Retrospect of American Authorship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> Roy Kotynek, *American Cultural Rebels: Avant-Garde and Bohemian Artists, Writers and Musicians from the 1850s to the 1960s* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 10.

the radical class consciousness which characterizes these urban bohémias is lacking at western art colonies.<sup>74</sup>

Jacobs shows awareness of issues of terminological ambiguity when he confesses that his inclusion of Abramtsevo in Russia is questionable since it was 'really more of an Arts and Crafts community than an artist colony'.<sup>75</sup> William Morris' Arts and Crafts Movement and Leo Tolstoy's peasant villages in Russia were two prominent examples of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century utopian projects which challenged the apparently unstoppable domination of work by industrial processes.<sup>76</sup> Western art colonies flourished during a period when utopianism had become a byword for any scheme contesting the status quo and was employed to describe groups experimenting with lifestyle choices from socialism to vegetarianism, and from free love to religious doctrines.<sup>77</sup> This desire to access a more spiritually satisfying kind of life is articulated by D. H. Lawrence. When he visited the Taos art colony he brought with him his vision of 'Rananim':

I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and found a little colony. [...] It is to be a colony built up on the real decency which is in each member of the community. A community which is established upon the assumption of goodness in the members, instead of the assumption of badness.<sup>78</sup>

These are idealistic rather than utopian sentiments. Although such projects and art colonies all exhibit a similar turn away from current situations, art colonies lacked the outright rejection of mainstream culture inherent in utopian schemes.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> I explore progressive ideas of gender which saw women enjoy 'a position at the centre of social circles consisting of some of the most interesting men of their generation' and a 'belief that sexual freedom was on a higher plane' at length in Chapter Four. Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: Tauris Parke, 2003), p. 89; Virginia Nicholson, *Among Bohemians: Experiments in Living, 1900-1939* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 44.

<sup>75</sup> Jacobs, *The Good and Simple Life*, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. vii.

<sup>77</sup> These are but a few examples of what Orrin Klapp terms 'collective behaviour' in *Collective Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1969), p. x.

<sup>78</sup> D. H. Lawrence, *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence: Volume I*, ed. by Harry T. Moore (London: Viking, 1962), p. 307.

<sup>79</sup> Jackson R. Wilson, *In Quest of Community: Social Philosophy in the United States, 1860-1920* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), p. 174; Brian J. L. Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments: Communal Havens from Long-*

The dearth of theorization of the specific form of settlement that art-colonists developed is addressed in Nina Lübbren's interdisciplinary *Rural Art Colonies: 1870-1910*. Eschewing the colony-by-colony approach employed by Shipp, Jacobs and Parry, Lübbren chooses to structure her work thematically. This is a significant innovation drawing on a range of fields outside art history, particularly geography, sociology and tourism studies. *Rural Art Colonies* highlights shared features of the art colony, including the romanticization of 'old-fashioned' locales, but, unlike Shipp and Jacobs, Lübbren is quick to assert both the heterogeneity of her 'collection of sites' and the 'common patterns of interaction that underpin the colonial project'.<sup>80</sup>

I take a similar approach in this thesis, tracing aspects of commonality amongst heterogeneous sites. However, my periodization and regionalization diverge from those of *Rural Art Colonies*, as does my turn away from an exclusive focus on painting. I am principally concerned with the experiences, encounters and interactions between people. The social relations between artists within a colony, between artists travelling between these sites and between colonists and non-colonists help me map out a rather different cultural terrain to that which has been considered in scholarship to date. Colony-produced art is, of course, a valuable and indispensable resource in this exploration, but where critics like Lübbren use colonists' behaviour to reinforce arguments about their art, I employ the opposite approach in which colonists' imaginative interpretations of colony experiences shed light on patterns of behaviour.

Lübbren marks the demise of the art colony movement around 1910, when, she argues, the 'highly-politicised' art of urban modernist coteries renders rural art colonies obsolete.<sup>81</sup> I argue, however, that art colonies did not end when modernist groups began to flourish, but developed into a new form of settlement which I discuss in this thesis. The Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos art colonies which thrived in the opening decades of the twentieth century diverge from predecessors in Europe

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*Wave Crises* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), p. xvii; Everett Webber, *Escape to Utopia: The Communal Movement in America* (New York: Hastings, 1959), p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Lübbren, *Rural Art Colonies*, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

and New England in key ways, but this does not negate their place within the history of the art colony movement.

Lübbren's assertion highlights the need for differentiation between western art colonies and other contemporary groupings, particularly modernist coteries. Modernist groups were attracted to modernity's 'conditions of possibility', using global audiences, mass media and mass transportation.<sup>82</sup> Western art colonies, conversely, continued to utilize the colony's detachment from the urban environment and centres of mass transportation, preferring to maintain a connection to mainstream America rather than to be immersed within it. Western art colonies were therefore reacting to urban modernity with its 'sense that the past is lost and gone' but lacked the 'oppositional, interventionist, politically engaged' aspect of modernist groups as defined, for example, by Jonathan Flatley.<sup>83</sup> Instead, art-colonists looked to rethink and alter mainstream American values and practices in pursuit of personal development. As Flatley argues, modernism constituted a 'symbolic space' in which the discrepancy between the promises and problems of modernity are 'contested, debated, reevaluated, or otherwise articulated' as well as a space in which art '*can and should do something about this gap*'.<sup>84</sup> This is a mentality that gives more to social utility than was given by art-colonists with their expressed desire for aesthetic invigoration and personal satisfaction.

Both modernist groups and western art colonies offered artists opportunities to socialize with like-minded others from eclectic backgrounds. Yet, as I have mentioned, artists in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos varied substantially in terms of their background, artistic inclinations and their engagement with the colony milieu, an engagement augmented by interactions with people and populations that were culturally different. Perhaps because of this variety, art-colonists lack the

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<sup>82</sup> Janet Lyon, 'Cosmopolitanism and Modernism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. by Mark Wollaeger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 387-412 (p. 388).

<sup>83</sup> Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 28; Nathan Waddell, 'Modernist Coterie and Communities', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, ed. by Peter Brooker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 740-61 (p. 741).

<sup>84</sup> Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, p. 32.

unity of opinion, agenda and behaviour characteristic of modernist coteries which promoted specific ways of thinking and common methods of composition across disciplines.<sup>85</sup> This is not to say that members of any modernist group were always of one mind, cohesively striving towards a single social or aesthetic goal. But as Nathan Waddell points out, groups within modernist groups continually 'came together, disbanded [and] reformed'.<sup>86</sup> Connections between colonists in California and New Mexico continually coexisted and evolved rather than exhibiting the stopgap formation and disbanding of modernist group activities.

It is the notion and practices of negotiation of mainstream culture, rather than complete rejection of it, which distinguishes the relationship between the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos and group formations like bohémias, utopian experiments and modernist coteries. Rather than rejecting other models and ideas, western art colonies incorporate them in order to create something new and different. These art colonies eschew easy categorization, incorporating aspects of the Barbizon-model art colony, urban bohémias, utopian experiments, and modernist coteries. Western art colonies added to such groups' distinct and identifiable patterns of behaviour.

To sum up, then, my survey of these terminological issues highlights the shortcomings of current definitions as well as the need for stronger acknowledgment of the distinctions between different types of artistic group. Parry's work is dogged by vague terminology while Jacobs and Lübbren both struggle to adequately define the parameters of their usage: 'art colony' becomes a catch-all term for any group of artists working in close proximity. This can be traced back to late nineteenth-century attempts at definition. In two influential articles on Fontainebleau colonies, art-colonists R. A. M. Stevenson and Robert Louis Stevenson both refer to the 'politics of a colony' and the 'drastic process of colonisation'.<sup>87</sup> Since then the term has been employed to define groups of

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<sup>85</sup> Helene Ali, 'The Common Pedagogy of the Uncommon: Building Aesthetic Community from the Ezuniversity to Black Mountain College', *Modernist Communities Conference*, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris, France 24-26 April 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Waddell, 'Modernist Coteries and Communities', p. 748.

<sup>87</sup> R. A. M. Stevenson, 'Grez', *Magazine of Art*, 17 (1894), 27-32 (p. 27); Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Painters', *Magazine of Art*, 7 (1884), 265-72 (p. 71).

artists in varying types of settings, including cities, rural villages and more remote locations. Artists studying in nineteenth-century Germany are described as an American colony in Munich just as artists in New York's Greenwich Village are labelled as an artist colony, as, too, are those who congregated in New England art colonies or those who joined Luhan in Taos.<sup>88</sup> This broad definition of an art colony denotes a group of people associated with a specific locale coming together through some shared interests. Association in such a colony, be it a village, an area of a city or specific buildings like bars and hotels acting as artists' haunts, brings a sense of affiliation with other artists. However, as I have shown, the process of travelling to art colonies in California and New Mexico was itself a distinct element of the art colony experience. Different experiences in different kinds of places create different kinds of art colony. In this thesis I explore the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as a specific subset in much more detail, considering it as a distinct kind of art colony influenced by practices of movement between and among the city and art colonies in California and New Mexico.

In stressing as I do the movement of colonists between urban centres and remote art colonies it is important to acknowledge the extent to which these western art colonies shared colonialist ideologies and justified their actions accordingly. Anglo-American artists 'discovered' places and assumed their right to stay. These were places relatively unknown to Anglo-Americans, providing a sense of a different way of life and, often, an experience of the 'exotic'. They were also places perceived as old-fashioned and underdeveloped, leading Anglo colonists to understand their role as saviours of places in need of protection. The relationship between colonists and their chosen colony location as well as the interactions that occurred between colonists and indigenous inhabitants replicate traditional colonial patterns. However, art colonies lacked the aggressive power of colonial endeavours. Although artists arriving in such places maintained social, class and ethnic

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<sup>88</sup> Robin Lenman, *Artists and Society in Germany, 1850-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 126; Caroline F. Ware, *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930: A Comment on American Civilization in the Post-War Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 241; Shipp includes both in his survey *American Art Colonies*.

hierarchies between themselves and other populations, they did not actively attempt to subordinate native inhabitants, nor were indigenous peoples 'removed' to enable their settlement. Scrutinizing the connotations of the term 'art colony' highlights the need to recover art colonies as sites of distinct meanings and connections.



### **Southwesternism: the art colony tradition in western settings**

The colonies that flourished in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos share some structural similarities with the main tradition of the art colony but are also profoundly shaped by their location in western settings. In the previous section I outlined how villages like Barbizon fulfilled art-colonists' expectations of a rural idyll. These were places where the effects of industrialization were less apparent to incomers and were perceived as belonging to a disappearing era of pre-industrial culture and values. They were communities organized around small-scale working practices that were seemingly at odds with the growing mechanization of industry. The idea that art colony locations were antithetical to the rapid modernization evident in cities is also widespread among colonists in Carmel, Taos and Santa Fe. The regional context of California and New Mexico significantly influenced the ways in which these typical features were exhibited and were central to subsequent divergences which distinguish western art colonies from the more common earlier model.

Literary and artistic interpretations of the west and southwest produced by writers in these art colonies built on a literary tradition of these regions which began in California's and New Mexico's territorial periods. The foreignness and inaccessibility of these regions during this time provided many Anglo writers with an 'exotic' American setting for tales of action and romance in dime novels, cowboy stories and local colour fiction. Later, the writings of Charles Fletcher Lummis, Adolph Bandolier and Frank Cushing further paved the way for colonist interpretations of the southwest. Archaeological and ethnographic interest in the southwest grew exponentially in the period between the railway arriving and New Mexico achieving statehood. The combination of empirical observations and imaginative interpretation of non-Anglo cultures, which some colonists similarly displayed, is embodied in the figure of Bandolier. An explorer and ethnologist, Bandolier came to Santa Fe at the end of the nineteenth century on behalf of the Archaeological Institute of America and published successful accounts of his time in the southwest. His aim to uncover and adequately communicate cultural 'otherness' is articulated in the preface to *The Delight Makers*:

I was prompted to perform the work by a conviction that however scientific works may tell the truth about the Indian, they exercise always a limited influence upon the general public.

[...] By clothing sober facts in the garb of romance I have hoped to make the 'Truth about the Pueblo Indians' more accessible and perhaps more acceptable to the public in general.<sup>89</sup>

The culmination of these two strands of southwestern rhetoric outlined by Bandolier are encapsulated by Maurice Sterne's entreaty to his wife, Mabel Dodge Luhan, to come to New Mexico: 'Dearest Girl. Do you want an object in life? Save the Indians – their art, culture – reveal it to the world'.<sup>90</sup> By building on such rhetoric, participants in western art colonies reinforced a deep-rooted mythologization of the southwest. The ways in which they interpreted the region, its ethnic populations and aspects of the colony itself reveal new, interesting versions of this southwesternism but the extent to which they build on older traditions is also pertinent throughout this study.

These artists and writers built on literary themes and motifs of the southwest, but with new objectives and different results. Although the works of writers like Bandolier predate colonist engagements with the southwest, they were, at least to some extent, working in this similar vein of southwestern myths and motifs and even celebrated their predecessors. Santa Fe poet and journalist Ina Sizer Cassidy, for instance, petitioned to have the library in Santa Fe dedicated to Bandolier.<sup>91</sup> Lummis encapsulates the ideas of romantic otherness consistently extolled by Santa Fe and Taos colonists:

Sun, silence, adobe – that is New Mexico in three words. [...] It is the Great American Mystery – [...] the United States which is *not* the United States. Here is the land of *poco tiempo* – the home of 'Pretty Soon'. Why hurry with the hurrying world? The 'Pretty Soon' of New Spain is better than the 'Now! Now!' of the haggard States. The opiate sun soothes to

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<sup>89</sup> Adolph Bandolier, *The Delight Makers* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood, 2011), p. v. Google ebook.

<sup>90</sup> Luhan, *Movers and Shakers*, p. 296.

<sup>91</sup> Letter Ina Sizer Cassidy to Edgar Hewett, 24 January 1919, Santa Fe, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, Edgar L. Hewett Collection, Box 3.

rest, the adobe is made to lean against, the hush of day-long noon would not be broken. Let us not hasten – *mañana* will do.<sup>92</sup>

This rhetoric was subsequently reinforced by travellers to these areas, another facet of this tradition taken up by colonists in the early twentieth century west and southwest. Travellers to New Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries echoed the prior rhetoric of enchantment that I outlined in the introduction to this thesis. In 1880, for instance, Susan Wallace extolled the isolation and antiquity of the landscape in language reminiscent of these earlier discourses of a mythic southwest. In her account of being ‘Amongst the Pueblos’ Wallace, wife of the then Governor of New Mexico, enticed creative Anglo-Americans to consider a trip to the southwest to throw off the shackles of a modern America with ‘no shadow, no mystery, no antiquity’ in favour of a region where ‘imagination may flower out in fancies rich and strange’.<sup>93</sup> She goes on to present her impressions of Santa Fe as a place ‘invested with indescribable romance, the poetic glamor which hovers about all places to us foreign, new, and strange’ before urging fellow Anglo-Americans to ‘come to the sweet and lonely valley where [...] there are neither railroads, manufacturers, nor common schools’.<sup>94</sup> Ideas of the southwest as home to a unique romantic otherness which ignored the presence of Anglo-Americans and mass industry, and a sense of remoteness despite the presence of the railway and improved conditions for car travel, all espoused in Wallace’s article, built on ideas established by early anthropological reports of the region, the exhortations of influential voices like Lummis, railroad promotional materials, and subsequently, touristic discourses of the southwest.

Some colonists were directly involved in New Mexico’s tourist industry. Erna Fergusson, writer and frequenter of the Santa Fe and Taos colonies, established an extremely successful

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<sup>92</sup> Charles Fletcher Lummis, *The Land of Poco Tiempo* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1893), p. 3. Internet Archive ebook.

<sup>93</sup> Susan Wallace, *The Land of the Pueblos* (New York: John B. Alden, 1888), p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

business organizing tours of the region's natural and cultural spectacles.<sup>95</sup> Invoking the rhetoric of southwestern tourism, Fergusson's Koshare Tours offered visitors a 'delightful glimpse into the past' and the opportunity to 'shake hands with a thousand years': 'New Mexico is the last of the states unspoiled by civilization. In a few years its primitiveness will be gone forever. The old West is giving way to the encroachments of the white man'.<sup>96</sup> Ironically enticing Anglo-American tourists with the promise of a place 'unspoiled' by the 'white man', Fergusson's marketing strategies encapsulate the attraction of the southwest to tourists and colonists alike. This was, for Marta Weigle, an exemplar of and a central moment in the history of 'Southwesternism', which she defines as a 'discourse' revealed in the development of tourism: Fergusson's Koshare Tours, renamed Indian Detours when they were taken over by the Fred Harvey Company, 'capitalized on (for the most part) Anglos appropriation and mystification [...] of native culture'.<sup>97</sup>

But Fergusson's tour literature also highlights the distinction between these types of visitors in the southwest, touting the 'modern art colonies' as amongst the sites to see in New Mexico.<sup>98</sup> Although tourists and colonists both engaged in cultural encounters which, we can safely assume, had a 'psychic and social impact' on indigenous peoples, Fergusson asserts the difference between touristic visits and the project of the art colony by distinguishing these colonies from other local 'curiosities'.<sup>99</sup> As Carol Traynor Williams argues, 'the tourists and natives who are ships passing in the

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<sup>95</sup> Erna Fergusson, like her brother and fellow colonist Harvey, was born in Albuquerque. She gained an understanding and respect of New Mexico's cultural diversity while working with the Red Cross during World War 1, after which she wrote extensively about Native American life. She founded her Koshare Tours of the region in 1921 and sold the thriving business to the Fred Harvey Company in 1926. She continued to write about the region in books such as *Dancing Gods* (New York: Knopf, 1931), *Our Southwest* (New York: Knopf, 1940) and *New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples* (New York: Knopf, 1951).

<sup>96</sup> Leaflet for Koshare Tours, Albuquerque, Center for Southwest Research (CSWR), University of New Mexico, Erna Fergusson Papers, Box 15A.

<sup>97</sup> Marta Weigle, 'Southwest Lures: Innocents Detoured, Incensed Determined', *Journal of the Southwest* 32 (1990), pp. 499-540 (p. 536).

<sup>98</sup> Koshare Tours promotional pamphlet, Erna Fergusson Papers, Box 15A.

<sup>99</sup> Hal K. Rothman argues that tourism 'transform[ed] locals into people who look like themselves but who act and behave differently as they learn to market their place and its, and their, identity', *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), p. 12. See also Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976). Colonists also engage with this touristic impulse, particularly in their attendance at Native American ceremonies, explored at length in Martin Padgett, *Indian Country*, pp. 169-210.

night are sadder, if safer, than guests and hosts who bump and jar and cut with their edges as they, at least, intersect'.<sup>100</sup> Intersections between colonists and indigenous peoples were, of course, complex and problematic (an issue which I explore at length in Chapter Three) but they did, indeed, intersect. Williams' remarks are also applicable to relationships between Anglo-American art-colonists, as they similarly 'bump[ed]' and 'jar[red]' with one another as they travelled into and out of the colony milieu: they were buoyed by interacting with each other as well as interacting with the region's indigenous peoples. Often mirroring the transient engagements of holidaymakers, these artists nonetheless formed *networks*: bonds between one another were formed through shared colony experiences.<sup>101</sup>

This thesis thus benefits greatly from the rich critical field surrounding southwest studies.<sup>102</sup> Existing scholarship provides a grounding to my understanding of these artistically-diverse places by illuminating the ways in which art-colonists attempted to communicate to the rest of society the 'strength and contentment they had gained from attachment to the American land', as Kay Aiken Reeve has suggested in her study of Santa Fe and Taos.<sup>103</sup> That land was the awe-inspiring landscape of the American southwest. As Witter Bynner wrote:

The Southwestern landscape, more than any other in North America, [...] is at once a humbling and an ennobling landscape. While not conducive, for an artist, to facile and officious performance, it breeds in him a sobering and releasing sense of time and space and of his possible dignity therein. And even from declining races, the Indian and Spanish

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<sup>100</sup> Carol Traynor Williams, *Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), p. xxii. See also Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic, 1991).

<sup>101</sup> For more on tourism in the American West see Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*.

<sup>102</sup> Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*; Vera Norwood and Janice Monk, eds, *The Desert is No Lady*; Padget, *Indian Country*.

<sup>103</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 14.

colonial, the influence of two cultures, much older than motor-cars, enriches and seasons an American beyond his ordinary birthright.<sup>104</sup>

Although they do not discuss the art colony specifically, works by cultural historians focusing on the American southwest are illuminating in terms of understanding Anglo-American engagements with the region. Artists and writers could have visited the southwest alone and stayed away from these clusters of artistic activity – indeed, some did – but these experiences are very different to those of western art colonies. Southwestern studies inform this thesis, providing a crucial link between descriptive overviews of art colonies and the use of theoretical frameworks. This thesis advances the centrifugal focus of such works by outlining how interactions between participants at the art colony influence the construction of cultural geography as much as the transmission of ideas from those who are there to those who are not.

By synthesizing disciplines like anthropology, art history, and geopolitical theory, Audrey Goodman's *Translating Southwestern Landscapes* highlights the complexity of understanding artistic sojourns in these remote places:

The Southwest at the turn of the twentieth century [was] a space shaped by the antinomies of American modernity, a site of competing landscapes and translation practices. These antinomies include the forces of capitalist expansion that lowered spatial barriers only to create a demand for diverse places; the rise of corporate, scientific, and artistic specialization as well as a psychology of individuation, reinvention, and escape; and formulations of American 'high culture' in response to the domination of mass audiences in every cultural field.<sup>105</sup>

The book's broad scope is reinforced through the discussion of many individuals. As well as the diversity of influences in the southwest, Goodman outlines the diversity of people present. Where some of the figures discussed frequented western art colonies, the book's emphasis is not on colony

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<sup>104</sup> Witter Bynner, 'Desert Harvest', *Southwest Review*, 14 (1928), 493-94 (pp. 493-94).

<sup>105</sup> Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*, p. xiii.

experiences. Drawing on a range of resources, Goodman clarifies the appeal of this region for artists and begins to tease out the influences between artists' experiences of the southwest and their artistic interpretations of it. In a similar way to Nina Lübbren's study, Goodman explores the practices of cultural place-making at work in the American southwest. In discussing Mary Austin's interpretation of southwestern subjects, for instance, Goodman writes that:

Her nonfiction sketches depict the desert as a space where nature determines individual character and social organization, while her song translations test the forms and limits of cross-cultural knowledge.<sup>106</sup>

Although this is an illuminating perspective on her work, Austin's depictions of the southwest are equally influenced by her presence at the Carmel and Santa Fe art colonies. As such, Goodman provides a useful resource for my understanding of the experiences of art-colonists like Austin and Willa Cather but these observations need to be considered alongside discussions of the art colony's specific form of settlement.

At a time when most Americans could not make the trip to see the southwest for themselves, impressions of the region were gained through the work of these artists and writers. In this respect, Goodman's assertion that southwestern landscapes are being 'translated' is an important observation. She sees art-colonists, like other artistic visitors discussed in the book, tasked with translating the foreignness of the southwest into familiar terms: a practice subject to the danger of misrepresentation, misappropriation and misunderstanding. Translated perceptions of the southwest travelled from the peripheral art colony to the centre of the artistic marketplace, painting a picture of southwestern culture in the popular imagination.

The specificity of artistic engagements with the southwest is reinforced in *The Desert is No Lady*, a collection of essays edited by Janice Monk and Vera Norwood. Monk and Norwood build on this body of literature which teases out directions of influence between an artist's experiences of the southwest and the art they produce therein, exploring 'not only how women have come to value the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

landscapes of the Southwest but also how their connections to the place shaped their artistic voices'.<sup>107</sup> Their gendered approach to southwestern studies restricts engagements with my own research since Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos all played host to both men and women. Highlighting the presence of women who experienced an evasion of social restrictions in the southwest does, however, invite comparisons with male engagements with this milieu. In the years following the close of the 'frontier', Norwood and Monk argue that mythic ideas of freedom and individualism were relocated to the southwest, providing a feminized frontier where women could enact autonomy unavailable elsewhere.<sup>108</sup> I argue that the western art colony provided a sense of opportunities 'unavailable elsewhere' for art-colonists, regardless of gender. Although female art-colonists were particularly constrained by conventional ideas of femininity (an issue which I explore at length in Chapter Four), I examine a range of engagements enacted by a range of art-colonists throughout this thesis and identify where opportunities for personal development were shared by male and female art-colonists.

Norwood and Monk justify their gendered analysis by highlighting the plethora of southwestern voices previously unheard in the southwest:

Canonical literature on the region is steeped in references to great male adventurers dominating a challenging environment. [...] The legends spring both from the early Spanish expeditions to the New World and from early adventures in what is known in twentieth-century America as the New Southwest. [...] As a new generation looks to the past for inspiration, descriptions of the region, and the West in general, as a male-dominated space continue into current literature.<sup>109</sup>

As I have said, Norwood and Monk ably contest these dominant narratives by exploring the experiences of individual women in the southwest. But a full understanding of the role of gender in

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<sup>107</sup> Norwood and Monk, 'Introduction: Perspectives on Gender and Landscape', in *The Desert is No Lady*, pp. 1-9 (p. 2).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.



western art colonies requires an analysis of male as well as female experience, as well as comparisons between the two. Yet even within their gender-prescribed boundaries, as an edited collection, *The Desert is No Lady* accommodates many different voices and perspectives. In many ways this is apposite since western art colonies provided some of the same diversity, though this also has the effect of separating these individuals, bordering each within a given chapter and discouraging comparison between figures. Further, by focusing on the experiences of women, the major achievement of Norwood and Monk's work is the re-examination of a long-held stereotype; namely, the presumption of female passivity in relation to frontier ideology.<sup>110</sup> No longer merely following in the wake of trailblazing men, these essays present women actively engaging with the real and mythic frontier in the American southwest. Western art colonies are in need of a similar re-examination: an exploration of this specific form of settlement through the framework of useful contextual discussions around gender, regionalism and community taken up by this thesis.

Martin Padget's *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest, 1840-1935* reinforces the contextual underpinnings of my project through a detailed interpretation of Native American representation. The relationship between Anglo- and Native Americans is, of course, a dense, rich field of criticism. But it is also an extremely useful lens through which to explore western art colonies. Seemingly ancient Native American races, so antithetical to Europeanized Anglo-Americans, were a major draw for artists and writers travelling to the southwest. They wrote about them, painted them, photographed them, conceived ways to 'protect' them, and, in Luhan's case, even married them. To Luhan's mind this union was 'a bridge between cultures', a notion which highlights ideas of the southwest as a contact zone and as a shared space where Anglo-American, Native American and Hispanic people coexisted and, to varying extents, interacted.<sup>111</sup> Through his commentary on this specific aspect of Anglo-Native experiences in the southwest, Padget

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<sup>110</sup> In this they build on the seminal work of Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

<sup>111</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, 'A Bridge between Cultures', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 5 (1925), 297-301.

emphasizes the need for detailed discussions about intercultural relations in western art colonies and similarly in depth examinations of other aspects of the colony milieu.

The distance between the urban east and remote southwest, traversed by so many art-colonists during this era, was reinforced by the distribution of colony-produced works in commercial American markets. Padget discusses the development of mainstream views of the southwest, highlighting the centre-periphery framework which underpinned this relationship:

Written and visual representations played a crucial role in constructing the cultural geography of the southwest during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [... helping to] clarify for readers the geographical and cultural boundaries of the region, and the nation of which it was a part.<sup>112</sup>

He sees the peripheral nature of the southwest and the centre of urban artistic marketplaces as not necessarily mutually exclusive. On the contrary, he shows them continually influencing each other. My analysis of western art colonies supports Padget's suggestion that art produced by Anglo-Americans in the southwest did not exist in isolation but always existed in relation to other places and ideas. One of the powerful achievements of Padget's book is its exploration of the ways in which visitors' 'real' southwestern experiences and their image in the popular imagination both affected Native American culture. For instance, in discussing the Euro-American penchant for attending Native American rituals, Padget asserts:

In time the Hopi Snake Dance, as a synecdoche for a romanticized vision of forms of knowledge and spirituality particular to Native Americans, became a site for Euro-Americans to imagine the possibilities of ways of living and comprehending the world that lay in counterdistinction to many aspects of modern American society.<sup>113</sup>

I similarly argue that art-colonists were seeking to understand and find a more intellectually satisfying way of life but that this was imagined through various aspects of the art colony milieu as

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<sup>112</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

well as in engagements with other cultures. Utilizing the network of connections which were established between them, art-colonists sought more satisfying ways to interact with each other. In this way they sought something which was not the opposite of modern American society, but a negotiation of this world.

Colonists were not the first Anglos in the southwest to present Native Americans and Spanish-speaking people as embodiments of 'the primitive': 'the idealization of ethnicity as a sort of trophy decoration aimed at lending the conditions of everyday life a privileged aesthetic status' and a perspective which 'renders ethnicity as devoid of dignity or elegance and instead seeks to contain it largely as a spectacle or curiosity' were both well established in these regions before artists and writers began congregating at Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos.<sup>114</sup> There are instances of both and, indeed, both of these representations are explored in Chapter Three, but this was far from universal at these colonies. Engagement with Indian rights, culturally-sensitive contact with Native American tribes, and even interracial marriage all attest to an evolved interaction between colonists and non-Anglo people in these places, negating a historic perception of 'Indians and Hispanics [...] existing only as American cultural myths and essentially interchangeable living clichés'.<sup>115</sup> Thus, although it is important to note the extent to which colonists built on existing, notably problematic, traditions of mythologization and cultural appropriation, it is equally as important to delineate how and where they diverge from such traditions.

My conclusions about the extent to which colonists subscribed to this colonialist rhetoric follows explorations by Curtis Hinsley and Michael Riley. Hinsley and Riley have both explored what Hinsley terms the 'roots of today's heavily commodified southwest'.<sup>116</sup> Colonists built on an established tradition of an Anglo presence in the southwest which reflected a post-Civil War appetite for the 'authentic' that had become commodified by the time artists and writers began congregating

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<sup>114</sup> Michael Riley, 'Constituting the Southwest, Contesting the Southwest, Re-Inventing the Southwest', *Journal of the Southwest* 36 (1994), pp. 221-241 (p. 226).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>116</sup> Curtis Hinsley, 'Authoring Authenticity', *Journal of the Southwest* 32 (1990), pp. 462-78 (p. 462).

in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos. The explorations and conclusions of this thesis represent new, distinct incarnations of a long-held Anglo search for 'authentic aesthetic/religious sensibilities, relations to landscape, modes of production, sexual identities, and social relationships'.<sup>117</sup> In this way many of the examples analysed throughout this thesis engage with the arguments presented in both of these astute works. My discussion of the importance of colonist homes in Chapter Two, for instance, illuminates how colony participants built on ideas of 'personal and cultural authenticity' manifested in 'spatial and temporal permanence'.<sup>118</sup>

Furthermore, for Hinsley, male-authored early reports of the southwest reflect how 'the separate male sphere of Victorian America [...] began to delineate a crippled and constricted expressive world'.<sup>119</sup> This is an interesting interpretation and useful perspective, particularly for my explorations of Chapter Four. While female colonists engage with and extend critical theories of a feminized and feminist southwest, it is important to bear in mind that male anxieties had also been traditionally played out in this space. Both male and female colonists utilized the space to seek 'license to imagine and express their imaginings'.<sup>120</sup>

There is a long tradition of artistic representations, as well as academic studies, presenting the idea that the southwest is a vague place on a map but perfectly distilled in imagination.<sup>121</sup> Riley presents a detailed and insightful exploration of the imaginative construction of place in his article 'Constituting the Southwest, Contesting the Southwest, Re-Inventing the Southwest'. Colonists adhere to many of the features of this regional understanding, particularly in relation to the ways in which culture shapes emotional responses. In Chapter Four, for instance, Austin's engagement with and mimesis of Native American activities emphasizes Riley's suggestion that the 'social construction of Pueblo Indian women [constitutes] a system of power [which] authorizes and authenticates certain cultural representations while disallowing others by conditioning an aestheticized and

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 462; see also Lears, *No Place of Grace*.

<sup>118</sup> Hinsley, 'Authoring Authenticity', p. 470.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 476.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p 476.

<sup>121</sup> Riley, 'Constituting the Southwest', p. 222.

longing gaze'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, as I will show, many colonists' interpretations of region emphasize an 'attention to cultural representation [that] must be understood in relation to the substantial economic and political benefits that have been realized through the marking of ethnic identities'.<sup>123</sup>

As colonists sought to play around with ideas, they reinforced what Hinsley articulates as 'the early genre of the southwest' as 'a field for imaginative play'.<sup>124</sup> Some colonists have invoked the concept of play in negative assessments of aspects of the colony milieu (D. H. Lawrence termed the southwest a 'playground' for Anglo artists while Raymond Otis described Santa Fe as a 'play-place' conducive to socializing but at the expense of work) but, as I assert later in Chapter Four, the idea of play also articulates the loosening of restrictions on art and behaviour, a key facet of the attraction of these colonies.

Problematically, colonists often inserted themselves into a picturesque, 'exotic' or 'primitive' scene through the adoption of Native American narrative voice, in much the same way that mid-nineteenth-century reports of the southwest presented Anglo 'explorer-narrator[s ...] as modern actor[s] on a prehistoric stage'.<sup>125</sup> As Hinsley articulates, early reports were characterized by the writer's notion of himself as exceptionally 'responsive to this world of color, domesticity, and artistic arrangement'.<sup>126</sup> Luhan was ardent in her search for a writer who could adequately interpret the region while Mary Austin was assured of her unique ability to 'understand' Native American culture, continuing a perception that the southwest provides opportunities for Anglo visitors to flex their creative sensibilities. Ansel Adams' experimentation with modernist form in his photographs of Taos Pueblo, discussed in Chapter Three, is another prominent example of Anglo visitors utilizing a sense of New Mexico as a place of 'intensely reflexive moments of aesthetic exercise'.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-26.

<sup>124</sup> Hinsley, 'Authoring Authenticity', p. 469.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 464.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 465-66.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 466.

The unique world that colonists built was one that offered a particular kind of community, opportunities for contact with other cultures and a space to play out social anxieties, all of which contributed to the aesthetically-invigorating atmosphere which produced a range of colony-produced art. This world was truly 'elsewhere': built in counter-distinction to the world of the city but always defined in relation to it, where art-colonists were somewhat at home but also somewhat away from home. This was a world elsewhere because it was defined in relation to other places these artists lived and visited. The art colony did not constitute a complete break from other places or ways to live, but a place to mediate and negotiate modes of living. It was a world which offered something different, something other, something else.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Movement and community in New Mexican art colonies**

The art colonies of Santa Fe, Taos and Carmel generated particular practices of movement based on a productive tension between ideas of travel, sojourning and liberation, and ideas of residence, homemaking and active attempts to create community. In this chapter I justify the importance of both colonists who exhibited a range of movement and those who found a sense of permanence of residency, highlighting a theme common to these seemingly dichotomous experiences: whether sporadic visitors of colony residents, colonists exhibited an emphasis on engagements with other colony participants as well as with the qualities of local geography and culture. Close analysis of the movements of people associated with these colonies reveals an intricate network of association within each colony, between the three colonies, and between the art colony and the city; a network augmented by the colonists who established homes in these places. While some travelled into and out of the colony milieu, others played host to those who travelled. Their constant presence at the colony meant figures like Alice Corbin, George Sterling and Mabel Dodge Luhan became lynchpins for many of the collaborative endeavours involving sporadic visitors, while their accommodation of an ever-changing crowd of guests provided a sense of 'standing still', however temporary. As such, the art colony represents a specific, alternative model of community but one which is formed through the continuous change of many colonists' diverse movements. These dichotomous actions combined to produce a lively, complex and critically-interesting milieu. There was a feeling of connection between participants (as exemplified by group endeavours and the hospitality of those who had set up home) but it was not a conventional sense of a community based on its participants' communality or homogeneity. Instead, it thrived because it fostered a sense of connection to other people which was unconstraining; notably, it lacked an obligation to stay and provided a continually changing group of people. Participants could temporarily engage with the colony milieu by moving to and from the colony, or they could set up home but still benefit from other people's movements by playing host to an ever-changing network of temporary association. I reveal a sense of unconstrained

attachment to place by analysing a range of colonists' real movements and imaginative representations of movements in these regions, while my discussion of the homes established and groups formed in these places emphasizes that many sought to mark their presence and be part of something collaborative while they were at the art colony.

My approach to and argument about this form of community necessitate discussion of an array of concepts, figures and texts. I am, of course, aware of the pitfalls of including such a range. Overstating the difference between people plays into an assumption that these were disparate individuals who happened to sometimes occupy the same space. Such a suggestion would undermine any attempt to draw critical connections between colony participants. Conversely, a sole focus on the things they had in common has the potential to be problematically reductive. Ignoring differences of background, age, nationality and artistic preferences can relegate an eclectic crowd to a homogenous group. As I discussed in Chapter One, this diversity has deterred critical analysis and secondary literature on these art colonies has fallen foul of both outcomes. Through the course of this chapter I acknowledge and embrace this diversity as one of the central tenets of the art colony community. What is so interesting about the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos is that people engaged with the colony space in a range of ways – they spent varying amounts of time in these places, engaged with other participants to varying extents and produced varying types of art, literature and intellectual discourses – but that this lack of a coherent 'set of rules' attributed, almost antithetically, to shared artistic themes and patterns of behaviour. Given the freedom to explore what they wanted from concepts like community, travel and the home, many came to the same conclusions. It resulted in many participants exploring similar things: the mediation of ideas of travel and settlement, variations of ideas of homemaking, and managing engagement with other people. As such, shared preoccupations and shared artistic themes can be traced through these diverse experiences of diverse people. Colony-produced literature (specifically fiction and poetry) is particularly illuminating in terms of shared ideas of an unconstraining community as these written forms of art often belie their writers' developing understanding and expression of what they sought



in the art colony milieu. There is room to develop and articulate these ideas; ideas which were rarely articulated about the art colony community overtly. Often not reflecting on their colony experiences directly, writers in these places explored and communicated these issues in their writing more than their counterparts who produced visual art.

As I have explained in this thesis thus far, the practices of movement and diversity of experience in these places does not so much resist theorization as require different interpretative frameworks to address the life of a community operating across different sites. It is this diversity which attracted so many creative people during this period and is also, I argue, the basis of critical understandings of the productive tension between movement and settlement. At the same time, I highlight the common themes discernible within these varying experiences of and engagements with the art colony milieu: particular ways of engaging with other participants enacted through specific practices of movement, specific versions of homemaking, and specific engagements in collaborative activities. This is achieved through two choices with regard to material: I limit my discussion to Santa Fe and Taos since these places yielded a wealth of examples of these experiences, and I favour literary texts since these are the most revealing of the common themes that I highlight. As such, in this chapter I acknowledge the diversity of colonist experiences but also demonstrate that these experiences of travelling to, from and between colonies are not disparate and unrelated, but generate a type of community that flourished in western art colonies. In this I am drawing on the work of James Clifford, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jessica Berman who have all developed notions of community which inform my exploration of what I term a network of temporary association.<sup>1</sup> My understanding of the community formed at western art colonies is predicated on their ideas.

It is important to note the extent to which many of the themes explored in this chapter can be, and have been, viewed from a specifically gendered perspective. As I will show through the course of this chapter, opportunities for both liberating movement and a sense of home were

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<sup>1</sup> James Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures'; Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. by Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction*.

appealing to progressive, unconventional women who set up home in these places and enjoyed an expanded sense of feminine domesticity. The homes of Corbin, Luhan and Mary Austin are all readable as expressions of the specific form of community underpinning these colonies. These acts of homemaking suggest a loosening of the confines of the domestic 'private sphere' by drawing on both local geography and culture, opening homes up both architecturally and socially.<sup>2</sup> Organic materials like adobe and the popularity of features like *portals* (porches) emphasize the mediation between outdoor and indoor space in homes constantly under modification to accommodate increasing numbers of guests. Local cultures were exalted as examples of community-orientated, integrated lives. Native American and Hispanic communities subsequently offered these Anglo-American women the opportunity to be homemakers on their own terms. As Vera Norwood and Janice Monk explain, these were cultures in which the concept of domesticity included aesthetic and spiritual expression for women.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in these colonies, women like Corbin, Austin and Luhan could negate a complete rejection of domesticity, adapting ideas of homemaking to accommodate their desires to be artists and hostesses as well as, in many cases, wives. Creating a home is obviously a very significant activity, particularly from a feminist perspective, and these women are working in the traditional mode of 'home space' as female space which 'threatens to reify precisely those stereotypes of the feminine that contemporary women have fought so hard to overturn'.<sup>4</sup> But they also assert an autonomy and deliberate reworking of this concept which marks them as radical and progressive. In this way, my analysis of the homes established by these women in these colonies

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<sup>2</sup> Local geography is more prevalent to the discussion of this chapter while Chapter Three presents an in-depth exploration of colonists' engagement with local cultures. There is a rich field of critical literature engaging with both of these aspects in a specifically southwestern context. Martin Padgett's *Indian Country*, Audrey Goodman's *Translating Southwestern Landscapes* and Leah Dilworth's *Imagining Indians* all form the basis for my discussion in Chapter Three, while Richard Francaviglia's essay 'Changing Images of the Southwest' in his edited collection with David Narratt, *Essays on the Changing Images of the Southwest*, and Keith L. Bryant's *Culture in the American Southwest: The Earth, The Sky, The People* both present engaging and extensive discussions of Anglo-American attraction to the region's distinctive topography.

<sup>3</sup> Norwood and Monk, *The Desert is No Lady*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Annette Kolodny, quoted in *ibid.* p. 25.

reveal the extent to which they were working within a feminist vein of revising traditional ideas of homemaking.

It is both interesting and important to note, however, that many men also set up home in these art colonies. Male colonists similarly utilized the sense of temporary connection and diversity provided by the group changing around them and enacted a version of homemaking which satisfied their desires for managed levels of interaction and a specific form of community. Sterling and Arnold Genthe, for instance, both built and established homes in Carmel which quickly became the focal point for myriad creative visitors. Witter Bynner and D. H. Lawrence also enact a sense of homemaking in Santa Fe and Taos respectively. Although Lawrence's residence in New Mexico proved to be temporary, the activities involved in establishing a home (such as buying, decorating and the routines of day-to-day life) influenced his experiences at the New Mexican colony. Similarly, as many women as men enacted the diverse movements involved in travelling to and from these places, either in established routines (like Georgia O'Keeffe in New Mexico or painter Xavier Martinez in Carmel) or on a more sporadic basis (like Jack London in Carmel and Willa Cather in Santa Fe).<sup>5</sup> This range of engagements utilizes the colony's opportunities for temporary and unconstraining associations while also revealing aspects of gender experiments on which I elaborate in detail in Chapter Four. In this chapter, conversely, I illuminate examples of these patterns of behaviour (setting up home and uninhibited travel) from both male and female art-colonists in order to draw attention to opportunities to broach these activities through other critical frameworks. In this way I build on revisionist approaches such as Annette Kolodny's rethinking of female agency in southwestern travel and recent critical discussions of male homemaking.<sup>6</sup> Like such works, I remove assumptions about the gendered alignment of certain patterns of behaviour to foreground my analysis of art-colonists

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<sup>5</sup> Born in Mexico, Xavier Martinez moved to San Francisco in 1893 and there established a reputation as a painter and central personality amongst the Bay Area artists. He made many visits to visit Sterling and other friends in Carmel and spent regular summers there between 1909 and 1914. Dramov, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Kolodny, *The Land Before Her*; for an insightful exploration of male homemaking see Andrew Gorman-Murray and Peter Hopkins' edited collection *Masculinities and Place* (London: Routledge, 2014), particularly Rosie Cox, 'Working on Masculinity at Home', [n.p.]. Google ebook.

with each other as part of an alternative model of community. In so doing I acknowledge the extent to which homemaking has traditionally been designated a 'feminine activity' and autonomous movement understood as a 'male pursuit' as well as recent theoretical revisions of these ideas but, instead of delving into this aspect in this chapter, I focus on what these patterns of behaviour reveal about the art colony as a set of meanings and connections. A gender critical perspective is nonetheless useful and extremely interesting when examining colonist experiences in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos, and is thus employed to explore western art colonies at length in Chapter Four.

During my discussion I pause to consider two particular colonists, Lawrence in Taos and Austin in Santa Fe, whose experiences illustrate many of the practices that I outline. Both seasoned travellers, Lawrence and Austin initially viewed the southwest as a temporary retreat, but both subsequently stayed and set up home in New Mexican art colonies. Both felt simultaneous and contradictory pulls of movement and settlement and were thus drawn to a community incorporating a productive tension between autonomy and affiliation. Incorporating a sense of freedom as well as a sense of belonging, both writers found the western art colony community to be fulfilling and conducive to work. Their experiences highlight the specificity of the attachments formed to the art colony milieu while their particular impressions and desires attest to the complexity of engagements with these communal groups.

## **Community**

The western art colony does not conform to traditional views of a community as a group made cohesive by shared interests, values or semblances of similarity.<sup>7</sup> Those present at Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos ranged widely in age, gender, profession, interests, aesthetics and philosophy as well as the amount of time they spent at the colony. This milieu is instead defined by *both* the attractions of

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<sup>7</sup> They are, for instance, the underpinnings of Ferdinand Tönnies' concept of *gemeinschaft* (community) in his seminal sociological study *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, trans. and ed. by Charles P. Loomis (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002).

settlement the colony offers *and* by the freedom to move into and out of the community that the colony allows. The sense of settlement at the art colony was fed by comfort, civility and the encouragement to 'belong' but was also characterized by the adventure and possible risks of unscripted movement. This perhaps appears to be a contradiction in terms. After all, the word 'colony' connotes a sense of settlement at odds with the unpredictable and unplanned movements made by colonists and does not adhere to common definitions of a community as a group of people setting down roots.<sup>8</sup> Instead of signifying permanence, however, these communities were defined by temporary engagements. Art-colonists came and went, staying for different amounts of time and varying in their engagement with other colonists. As opposed to limiting engagements with the art colony to either sporadic trips or permanent residence, each sustains the other, as Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant explains:

Santa Fe is not just another part of the United States, but in some sense a separate land, with a being and laws of its own. [...] Visiting writers [...] brought real nourishment to colonist writers who had decided to take the plunge and become regular taxpayers.<sup>9</sup>

These writers felt a sense of belonging both in and away from the art colony. Sergeant's sentiments emphasize that the appeal of these places was bound up with aspects of permanence provided by those who had set up home in these art colonies: her 'separate land' is not without other 'colonist writers'.

In combining these two concurrent but seemingly contradictory issues (a sense of settlement as well as a sense of movement) these places are sites of both dwelling and travelling or, to use

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<sup>8</sup> D. E. Poplin focuses on community as a territorial term in his survey of terminological usage *Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research* (New York: Macmillan, 1979). The relationship between a territorial sense of community and the word 'colony' also takes on a specific relevance in an American context, as explored by such theorists as Alan Taylor in *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin, 2001) and Richard Middleton in *Colonial America: A History, 1607-1760* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> It is an odd choice to refer to permanent residents as 'taxpayers', inferring bureaucratic rules for living, but it does remind us that art-colonists remained rooted in mainstream systems and displayed no desire to live completely 'off-grid'. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, 'The Santa Fe Group', *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 8 December 1934, pp. 352-354 (p. 353).

James Clifford's words: 'histories, tactics, [...] practices of dwelling *and* traveling'.<sup>10</sup> The western art colony constituted a point of intersection between diverse and ongoing movements, punctuating the to-ing and fro-ing of art-colonists' travels with an alternative model of community. Those congregating at these art colonies were interconnected through their shared presence at the art colony and a shared engagement with the American southwest that they actively sought to assert both physically (by being there) and imaginatively (by producing art which interprets the region). With people coming and going, some staying for short durations and others moving permanently, the community of the art colony has something of the character of Clifford's characterization of hotels, prompted by the propensity of artists living in 1920s and 30s Paris:

I'd been struck by how many of the Surrealists lived in hotels, or hotel-like transient digs, and were moving in and out of Paris. And I was beginning to see that the movement was not necessarily *centered* in Paris. [...] Paris as a site of cultural creation included the detour and return of people. [...] Surrealism traveled, and was changed in travel.<sup>11</sup>

As meeting points punctuating individual movements, hotels acted as 'homes away from home [...] launching points of strange and wonderful [...] voyages' that became 'places of collection, juxtaposition [and] passionate encounter'.<sup>12</sup> As a network of temporary association, the western art colony community requires similar analysis as a place of collection and juxtaposition.

Yet unlike casual interactions between hotel guests in transit, which Clifford describes as 'fleeting, arbitrary encounters' between individuals stopping off on a detour or returning from enriching travel experiences, interactions at art colonies are much more significant, influencing artists and the work they produced in the west.<sup>13</sup> My understanding, then, of this alternative yet satisfying form of community also draws on Jessica Berman's notions of non-traditional communities found within the pages of early-twentieth-century novels. In *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism*,

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<sup>10</sup> Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures', p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

*And the Politics of Community* Berman argues that certain modernist writers acknowledged and contested the demise of traditional conceptions of community through practices like communality, shared voice and the exchange of ideas.<sup>14</sup> Berman highlights, for instance, the absence of a community based on traditional concepts like kinship or proximity in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and *The Waves*. The pertinence of Woolf's characterization of people as 'splinters & mosaics; not, as used to hold, immaculate, monolithic, consistent wholes' is used to reinforce an alternative vision of community formed through 'the combination of dissociated selves into a social mosaic' in Woolf's novels.<sup>15</sup> Although Berman goes on to trace the implications of this notion for Woolf's social activism, her observations have useful implications for understanding western art colony communities. As a similarly splintered group, the concept of a mosaic is applicable to the situation at these sites where often diverse individuals came together to form a collaborative collective. For Berman, Woolf's alternative community offered a 'notion of affiliation' which 'stands in opposition to both atomistic individualism *and* to conventional modes of construing community in which the group exists as a "monolithic, consistent, whole"'.<sup>16</sup> Western art colonies operate in much the same way.

Berman restricts her identification of new forms of community to the pages of modernist fiction, omitting discussion of real-world communities in order to focus on authorship. Yet these ideas are valuable for understanding actual patterns of behaviour at western art colonies. The temporary affiliations established in these places attest to the alternative model of community operating therein. Whilst dwelling at the art colony, artists, as we shall see, give indications of feeling part of a community. They mark their presence. A sense of belonging was in part created by the sustained presence of those who had set up home (such as Mabel Dodge Luhan and Alice Corbin), and was reinforced by the profusion of associations that were formed and then went on to flourish in these places. However long they were there, artists and writers were keen to align themselves with

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<sup>14</sup> Berman, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. II: 1920-24*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 314; Berman, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 122.

<sup>16</sup> Berman, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 122.

the pleasures (social, aesthetic and natural) available in the art colony community. Colonist accounts attest to the gratification artists found in the southwest, offering interactions with a different landscape, other artists and non-Anglo cultures. The colony milieu thus provided conditions that were not available elsewhere. Essentially, affiliation with the art colony community meant affiliation with an informal and unconstraining form of artistic environment. Artists sought to assert their place within an environment which they found to be inspiring and conducive to the production of art. Many of the groups established in these places encouraged supportive peer criticism and the promotion of colony-produced art. Through such endeavours colonists celebrated their attraction to the southwest as a region and to the art colony community as a place of artistic collaboration.

Participation in art colony activities emphasized the satisfaction found in these places, an acknowledgment which could endure beyond an artist's presence in the southwest. Presence at the western art colony did not restrict artists' time in other environments and artists could determine their own level of engagement. The establishment of homes and groups constituted formal acknowledgements of artists' connection to the colony milieu, an association which remained when they were not present in the southwest. Affiliations to other places did not undermine this relationship with the art colony but actually constituted a series of multiple allegiances. Declaring their presence at the art colony, even if that presence was temporary, emphasized the validity of these multiple attachments. The character of the art colonies in Santa Fe and Taos, defined by diversity and a productive tension between transient and permanent occupation, validated different experiences without hierarchizing them: certain engagements with the southwest were not deemed more or less important than others. Indeed, ideas, interests and intentions could be as temporary as artists' multitudinous movements: there was no consensus and no limitation on capricious opinions. This flexibility meant that, in essence, nothing was set in stone and nothing stood still. That these art colonies accommodated this range of experiences and afforded colonists this freedom was paramount to their success. At any given time, the art colony provided diverse experiences for



colonists. As improvisatory spaces, Santa Fe and Taos sanctioned and even thrived on a mutating population of colonists and their managed engagements with the art colony community.

### **Movement and travel**

Frequent and diverse movement is a central and shared aspect of this form of settlement. As discussed in the opening of this thesis, these movements could be arduous: their geographic positioning, so detached from American eastern cities, meant that getting to a colony was a significant undertaking. People did not visit simply because they happened to be in the neighbourhood; journeys were undertaken after considerable prior arrangement. Preparations could not, however, make the journey easier. Mabel Dodge Luhan's car ride through New Mexico, discussed in the Introduction, is indicative of many colonists' uncomfortable, time-consuming experiences. Cars were unreliable and struggled to cope with the rough terrain of the New Mexican landscape, yet, as Luhan's experiences also reveal, car travel made these vast, harsh landscapes more accessible. Cars and trains facilitated journeys to remote art colonies, enabling artists to reach these places more easily, more frequently and independently. They enabled an autonomy of movement characteristic of these art colonies.

Artists' experiences of being in the southwest were much enhanced by these independent, diverse movements. Their use of modern modes of transport, the car in particular, not only drew attention to the distinctiveness of modes of living that colonists thought of as pre-modern and modern, they also enabled them to describe a new kind of satisfying experience which combined the two. Rather than an antithetical understanding of the city and southwest, of modern and ancient, practices of movement at western art colonies presented these modes of living as mutually constitutive. This is why artists endured the problems of car travel and why accounts of these movements are permeated with reflections on personal experience and colony-produced art. In the following anecdote of her colony experiences, for instance, Mary Austin illustrates how the familiar practice of driving is transformed in the southwest into a captivating experience. Austin had found

life as wife and mother stifling and restrictive, relishing the opportunities to venture out of the domestic sphere that her success as a writer came to afford her. She set off on a series of travels with her daughter on the profits of her first novel, *The Land of Little Rain*, and was soon drawn to the desert landscapes of New Mexico which shared so much with the Californian terrain that had inspired her debut work. Travelling within the region augmented her sense of liberation in movement, providing her access to observe and explore other cultures, other versions of femininity and other ways of life. Recounting her numerous trips to the southwest in the early 1920s Austin recalls the journeys of 'exploration and discovery' which acquainted her with the 'beauty, the mystery, the charm of New Mexico':

Tony [Lujan] is an exceptionally good driver, not like the average American driver who constitutes himself merely the master of the car's mechanisms, the exhibitionist, but making it the extension of his personality. Tony puts the car on, and when he begins, as he does usually, to sing the accentless melodies of his people which fit so perfectly to the unaccented rhythms of the machine, one has the sensation of sailing on the magic carpet along the floor of space.<sup>17</sup>

By contrasting an ostentatious handling of the car with a more 'instinctual' driving experience in the southwest, Austin not only highlights an easeful pleasure of movement but also evokes an enchanting, imaginative experience through which the passenger gains a profound sense of the landscape: a view from 'space'. Equally, at the same time, this view from 'space' echoes the comforting sense of remove provided by travelling by car. The thrill of proximity to deeply unfamiliar cultures is tempered by a sense of being safely enclosed in the automobile. The advantages of modern transport are exploited but the car's speed and protection are utilized in an effort to attain a new and delightful experience. Austin's is not a representation of a southwestern (or Native American) experience as the antithesis of mainstream American progress, but a meeting of the two. Tony Lujan and his car represent the union of man and machine, the combination of ancient culture

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 355.

and modern technology, transforming the mundane experience of city driving into a new, extraordinary experience.<sup>18</sup>

The opportunity for this kind of experience is similarly emphasized by Edith Lewis in her memoir of her 1925 trip to New Mexico with Willa Cather. Lewis was Cather's companion and professional associate for forty years, until the latter's death. She was immersed in the aesthetic marketplace in her role as editor at *McClure's* and accompanied Cather to the southwest when the novelist headed to the region for research and inspiration:

Tony would sit in the driver's seat, in his silver bracelets and purple blanket, often singing softly to himself; while we sat behind. He took us to some of the almost inaccessible Mexican villages hidden in the Cimmaron mountains, where the Penitentes still followed their old fierce customs; and from Tony, Willa Cather learned many things about the country and the people that she could not have learned otherwise.<sup>19</sup>

Tony Lujan's chauffeuring skills and his dulcet rendition of Native American songs are again evoked. In this example both Tony Lujan and the car seem to enable access to esoteric forms of knowledge: the remoteness and long tradition of the practices of the Penitentes are enfolded in the modern experience of driving; the car facilitating physical access while Tony Lujan, as tour guide, provides cultural access to the 'many things' Cather 'learned'. Practices of movement made these discoveries possible. By this time Cather had won the Pulitzer Prize for her 1922 novel *One of Ours* and was searching for a new direction – literally and aesthetically.

The imaginative interplay between the city and the southwest presented in *The Professor's House*, discussed earlier in Chapter One, also emphasizes art-colonists' desire to 'co-ordinate and

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<sup>18</sup> Mabel Dodge added Lujan to her name after their marriage but amended the spelling to Luhan to make it easier for her Anglo-American friends to pronounce. I refer to him by his full name, with the original spelling, so as to avoid confusion.

<sup>19</sup> Edith Lewis, *Willa Cather Living: A Personal Record* (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. 142; Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 56. Edith Lewis was a magazine editor and later advertising copywriter. She met Cather in 1903, became Cather's work editor in 1908, accompanied Cather on southwestern trips and the two women lived together in New York City until Cather's death in 1947. She reflected on their relationship in *Willa Cather Living: A Personal Record* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

simplify' different modes of living, as Outland, Cather's representative in the novel, articulates.<sup>20</sup>

Cather seems never to have felt the desire to move permanently to either of the New Mexican art colonies since travelling between the city and the southwest provided experiences which she felt neither could provide alone. This was the appeal of the western art colony. Having been there, she could feel herself connected to the southwest even when away from it. Recounting Tom Outland's experiences in the southwest brings a vestige of the region to Godfrey St Peter in the city, creating a link between two very different modes of living.

Equally, the professor's study maintains a residue of the mesa through the novel's proliferation of parallels with the ancient Native American cliff dwellings discovered by Outland, and the reader is invited to understand the two spaces as discrete yet connected in imagination. His attic study, for example, is immediately established as a place of intellectual exploration and creativity, as opposed to his 'show study' downstairs, a 'sham' room housing his library and a 'proper' desk. Removed and detached, it is here that the professor explores non-Anglo American culture: researching and writing his life's work on Spanish explorers in America. Although situated in the city, St Peter's study allegorizes the experiences Cather and many others gained in the southwest and what they took away from it.<sup>21</sup>

The details of the professor's attic sanctuary are echoed later in the Blue Mesa cliff dwellings. Immediately awed by this 'world above the world', Outland's descriptions of Cliff City reinforce a mirroring of the two spaces: the 'yucca-fibre mats' on the floors of the village houses find their counterpart in the 'matting on the floor' of St Peter's attic study; the mesa's courtyard has a 'low stone wall' similar to St Peter's walled-in French garden; even the corpse Outland and his companion find in the Native American cliff dwellings, which has 'a great wound in her side' through which 'the ribs stuck out through the dried flesh', recalls a seamstress' mannequin in the study which has 'no viscera behind its glistening ribs'.<sup>22</sup> This series of linkages strengthens the connective sinew

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<sup>20</sup> Cather, *The Professor's House*, p. 251.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-40.

between the city and the southwest and draws attention to the rich possibilities of moving between the two. Through the association of seemingly opposite spaces, Cather gives imaginative expression to the powerful attraction and accessibility of the western art colony. In the same way, the frequent movements of art-colonists, in this case between the city and the southwest, did not preclude a sense of belonging at the art colony but actually added to it: these were places which simultaneously provided a sense of being at home and being in frequent if not constant movement. Cather maintained an attachment to both modes of living because the art colony accommodated both. In this, she was far from alone.

Harvey Fergusson, another writer who made sporadic trips to the art colony, expresses a similar notion that the city and southwest were discrete yet connected physically and imaginatively. Fergusson thrived on the frequent change between environments, his real-life and imagination of movements between the city and the southwest suggesting an ideal balance between the two. By the time he started to frequent the Santa Fe and Taos colonies in the 1920s and 30s Fergusson had found success with political novels but was searching for subject matter that he felt could be his *raison d'être*. As well as the western landscape which he found to be awe inspiring and spectacular, the colony set up provided him with an environment conducive to aesthetic thinking. Fergusson's novels mirror his own movements between New York and New Mexican art colonies: his characters' alternating presence in the city and the southwest are matched by interchanging attitudes towards both. Experiences of one enhance experiences of the other. The protagonist of his 1930 novel *Footloose McGarnigal*, for instance, moves between the urban east and distant southwest, invigorated by experiences of both ways of life. The novel opens with Alec McGarnigal leaving his life as an anonymous white collar office worker in New York City, living 'a life of endless repetition – riding to work on the same train every morning, hanging his coat on the same peg, getting the same crick in his neck'.<sup>23</sup> After receiving an inheritance, Alec seizes the opportunity to escape the city and embarks on a trip through the American southwest. Eventually, though, he comes to recognise a

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<sup>23</sup> Harvey Fergusson, *Footloose McGarnigal* (New York: Knopf, 1930), p. 6.

longing to return to the city, realising that his experiences of the remote southwest have served to illuminate the joys of the urban east. In the closing scene of the novel, after deciding to return to the city, Alec watches a train hurtle across the desert. Like the anecdotes from Austin and Lewis, Fergusson's travels are fictively invoked through modes of travel:

In the dead blackness of the night it looked immensely alive, cutting the dark with swift fiery purpose, rushing unerringly through the black inhuman chaos of the mountain night toward great cities of light and order. [...] He was riding toward the city – the monster he had fled – and in his vision it shone with bright colors of desire. It was everything he wanted now, everything he lacked. [...] He was half afraid of it but he knew it was where he belonged. It was his wilderness to explore, his peril. It was the frontier of his spirit.<sup>24</sup>

The city and the southwest are both, at times, exciting and inviting 'frontier[s]'. Here at the novel's denouement the train offers relief to Alec, yearning, as he is, to return to the 'wilderness' of urban civility. Once a 'monster he had fled', the city is now a place of 'light and order'. The southwest which had so beguiled Alec is now merely a 'black inhuman chaos'. As Alec's opinion towards these two distinctive regions mutates they become counterparts: each is defined by the other.

Specific practices of movement generated networks of connection at western art colonies as diverse but comparable movements enhanced artists' experiences of the southwest. The examples of Cather and Fergusson highlight and even celebrate the complementary relationship of being in the southwest and away from it. After all, these new experiences in a new space could be controlled to suit each individual. Modern modes of transport facilitated encounters with ancient, unfamiliar places while movements between the city and southwest created a connective sinew between distinctly different spaces. Undermining ideas of the city and southwest as antithetical, their combination allowed art-colonists to maintain attachments to different modes of living because they believed them to enhance each other. Artists could feel an attraction to and connection with the southwest even when they were not present and even if they chose not to be there continuously.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

## D. H. Lawrence in Taos

A brief survey of D. H. Lawrence's travels is illustrative of this writer's search for a new mode of community that accommodated a limited level of engagement crossed with frustration at the forms of community he actually encountered. Lawrence deserted England after the trauma he experienced during the war years, embarking on a voyage of voluntary exile. The author had already found substantial commercial and critical success and was welcomed into artistic communities in his homeland. But this had not made him happy, and he set out on a series of travels. But these travels ultimately led to the conclusion that movement alone was not sufficient. As Lee Jenkins explores in *The American Lawrence*, the idea of roots verses routes was a 'false binary between the bounded rational subject and world citizenship *sans frontiers*'.<sup>25</sup> From this perspective, Lawrence's assertion that 'I am English, and my Englishness is my very vision' becomes less an assertion of nationalist fervour, but rather an articulation of the benefits of being an outsider. All the participants in western art colonies were outsiders, none were native to Carmel, Santa Fe or Taos. This provided an opportunity to set down roots while still embarking on various routes through continued movement and travel. The Taos art colony presented an opportunity for Lawrence, as for many others, to reconcile this supposed duality through a productive tension of movement and settlement.

After leaving England in 1919, he and wife Frieda travelled until his death in the south of France in 1930. With only brief returns to his home country, the pair visited Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), Australia, America and Mexico. Although much of Lawrence's literary output was directly influenced by specific places on these travels – including *Twilight in Italy*, *Mornings in Mexico* and *Kangaroo* – his travels constituted a series of restless searches:

Months spent in holy Kandy, in Ceylon, the holy of holies of southern Buddhism, had not touched the great psyche of materialism and idealism which dominated me. And years, even

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<sup>25</sup> Lee Jenkins, *The American Lawrence* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), p. 5.

in the exquisite beauty of Sicily, right among the old Greek paganism that still lives there, had not shattered the essential Christianity on which my character was established. Australia was a sort of dream or trance, like being under a spell, the self remaining unchanged, so long as the trance did not last too long. Tahiti, in a mere glimpse, repelled me: and so did California, after a stay of a few weeks. There seemed a strange brutality in the spirit of the western coast, and I felt: O, let me get away!<sup>26</sup>

These varied responses reinforce L. D. Clark's assertions of 'what travel meant to Lawrence's life and work'.<sup>27</sup> Clark praises Lawrence's response to place, eloquently exemplified in the passage above, but ultimately characterises these experiences as traversing the Minoan distance through a series of perfunctory, futile travels.<sup>28</sup> I extend Clark's conclusions by highlighting Lawrence's response to a specific atmosphere and version of community operating within the Taos art colony. Like many participants at these art colonies, Lawrence's praise and appreciation of New Mexico's local geography and cultures also reveal his desires for and engagement with the alternative model of community nurtured in these colonies. I elucidate what the colony milieu specifically offered through an analysis of his responses to this place. For instance, the examples Lawrence outlines in his survey of these travels allude to his attempt to find a place in which he feels he belongs, one which satisfies his shifting sense of what he needs as an artist. They also indicate why these ventures were unsuccessful, with a variety of places considered but all ultimately rejected. The problem, essentially, is that none of these places provided the right level of community. With England deemed undesirable, Lawrence appraises the antithetical climes of Ceylon which, as the 'holy of holies of southern Buddhism', offered a markedly different way of life in both landscape and culture. Then he considers Sicily, where the way of life is still imbued with the 'old Greek paganism' of an ancient heritage. In these vastly differing environments the idea of community is too traditional: it is too set

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<sup>26</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'New Mexico', in *D. H. Lawrence and New Mexico*, ed. by Keith Sagar (Salt Lake City: G. M. Smith, 1982), pp. 95-100 (p. 96). All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>27</sup> L. D. Clark, *The Minoan Distance: The Symbolism of Travel in D. H. Lawrence* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), p. 411.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.



in stone, physically and figuratively. Colonial Australia, however, held the promise of being comparatively new, comparatively uninhabited, and thus afforded Lawrence the autonomy he felt was constrained in places which had evolved from ancient civilizations. But, alas, here there was too much freedom and too little company. With nothing and no one to provide a sense of community, it is nothing more than a 'trance'. Lawrence drifts, unanchored. In all these places the way of life was either too prescriptive or not prescriptive enough. There was either too much community, or not enough.

These brief remarks reveal much about the kind of group Lawrence desired and the tacit tenets of his notion of 'Rananim'.<sup>29</sup> Outlining his vision of a new form of community in correspondence with the Russian-English translator S. S. Koteliansky, Lawrence proclaimed his ambition to 'find a place – and you will come on. That is the living dream. We will have our Rananim yet'.<sup>30</sup> Despite his widespread and varied searches, Lawrence's vision of Rananim lay close to home: 'If only there were not more than one hundred people in Great Britain! – all the rest clear space, grass and trees and stone!'<sup>31</sup> The series of locations in which Lawrence's 'self remain[ed] unchanged' were all thus eliminated as potential locations for this new model of community. For Lawrence, a new, more satisfying form of community needed to be situated in a place which was not densely populated yet dominated by an Anglo-European sense of 'civilization'.<sup>32</sup> They also reveal Lawrence's desire for a social environment which is structured but still allows for a significant amount of personal freedom. He did not want to be told how to live, but at the same time did not want to be left completely to his own devices. What he craved instead was something incorporating both of these seemingly contradictory desires: a new form of community which afforded the attractions of

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<sup>29</sup> George J. Zytaruk, ed., *The Quest for Rananim: D. H. Lawrence's Letters to S. S. Koteliansky, 1914-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970)

<sup>30</sup> *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence: October 1916-June 1917*, ed. by James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> *The Selected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by James T. Boulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> Eliot Fay, *Lorenzo in Search of the Sun: D. H. Lawrence in Italy, Mexico and the American South-West* (London: Vision, 1955).

settlement with the freedom to move; where an artist can be part of a network but still insist on autonomy.

Lawrence wanted something new, and America seemed to offer a promising option. This was, however, a mythic America derived from Henry David Thoreau and James Fenimore Cooper:

[In America] the *skies* are not so old, the air is newer, the earth is not tired. Don't think I have any illusions about the people, the life. The people and the life are monstrous. I want, at length, to get a place in the far west mountains, from which one can see the distant Pacific Ocean, and there live facing the bright west.<sup>33</sup>

Lawrence's denunciation of the American populace extended to those congregating in Taos.

Responding to an invitation from Mabel Dodge Luhan, Lawrence asked 'Is there a colony of rather dreadful sub-arty people? – But even if there is, it couldn't be worse than Florence'.<sup>34</sup> Reference to the location of Luhan's first artistic salon makes this a particularly barbed comment while also emphasizing Lawrence's apprehension about the amount of socializing which would be required of him at the art colony. This trepidation initially proved to be well founded on the Lawrences first visit in 1922. When they returned in 1924, however, this time accompanied by English painter Dorothy Brett, they decided to buy a ranch on Luhan's property which stood twenty miles away from Taos Pueblo. Alluding to tensions between the writer and his host, Lawrence confided to Brett: 'I think [...] that we would be better up there, more to ourselves. Things would be less difficult'.<sup>35</sup> Lawrence's response to Luhan emphasizes how Jenkins' assertion that the United States 'acted on him as a stimulant and irritant in equal measure' is equally applicable to his experiences of the colony itself.<sup>36</sup> Relationships with other colonists and opportunities for collaborative activities elicited both positive and negative responses from the author. As such, like other art-colonists, the home Lawrence established in Taos marked his affiliation with the art colony whilst simultaneously providing a means

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<sup>33</sup> Lawrence, *Collected Letters*, p. 481.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 671-72.

<sup>35</sup> Brett, *Lawrence and Brett*, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins, p. 11.

of achieving solitude. It allowed the author to participate in collaborative colony activities, including contributing to Spud Johnson's *Laughing Horse* magazine and Alice Corbin's poetry anthology *The Turquoise Trail* during his sojourns in New Mexico, while maintaining control over the extent of these connections. By May 1924 Lawrence had agreed to exchange the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers* for a small ranch belonging to Luhan, christened the Kiowa Ranch.

Lawrence alludes to the western art colony's dual attractions of settlement and freedom allegorically. Describing an eagle surveying the vast beauty of the southwestern landscape, one of Lawrence's earliest colony-produced poems illustrates the balance between autonomy and connectedness:

Towards the sun, towards the south-west  
A scorched breast [...]  
Erect, scorched-pallid out of the hair of the cedar,  
Erect, with the god-thrust entering him from below'.<sup>37</sup>

Such poems could reinforce Michael North's argument that 'the only place [Lawrence] finally belonged was in transit'.<sup>38</sup> Movement is certainly vital here, especially this sense of the soaring flight of the eagle reminiscent of Austin's magic carpet ride. But, crucially, Lawrence's majestic ornithological subject maintains an attachment to the land over which it soars. Rather than merely viewing the landscape, the pantheistic 'god-thrust' creates an inextricable connection. Lawrence's desire for movement and autonomy subsequently do not negate an attachment to the colony as participants can move freely into out and out of this milieu and maintain attachments to place without a permanent presence. He can maintain a sense of connection to Taos even when 'in flight' to other places.

Equally, the desired level of community afforded by life on the ranch is evidenced in subtle changes to Lawrence's idyllic American vision. He later reflected:

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<sup>37</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Eagle in New Mexico', in *D. H. Lawrence and New Mexico*, ed. by Sagar, pp. 13-14 (p. 13).

<sup>38</sup> Michael North, *Reading 1922: Return to the Scene of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 12.

All those mornings when I went with a hoe along the ditch to the Cañon, at the ranch, and stood, in the fierce, proud silence of the Rockies, on their foot-hills, to look far over the desert to the blue mountains away in Arizona, blue as chalcedony, with the sage-brush desert sweeping grey-blue in between, dotted with tiny cube-crystals of houses, the vast amphitheatre of lofty, indomitable desert, sweeping round to the ponderous Sangre de Cristo mountains on the east, and coming up flush at the pine-dotted foot-hills of the Rockies! What splendour!<sup>39</sup>

In one exuberant sentence Lawrence encapsulates the vitality of the New Mexican landscape and expresses a sense of looking down on the region in a similar way to the eagle of his earlier poem. The jubilant tone attests to the similarity between Lawrence's experience and the mythic America he had previously envisioned.<sup>40</sup> Yet in this latter description a human presence has entered Lawrence's idealized scene, albeit at a marked remove. Where once he fantasized of living in a 'bright west' untouched by 'monstrous people', Lawrence now invokes the formation of local communities in order to articulate his desire for a balance between isolation and engagement, represented in the other people situated in 'tiny cube-crystals of houses'. In this Lawrence engages with what Tom Lutz and Laura Doyle have respectively explored as an invocation of regional cultures to inform and influence mainstream culture.<sup>41</sup> Lawrence draws on non-Anglo New Mexican communities as exemplars for his new vision of community in much the same way as other colonists' homes foreground their perception of local community-orientated cultures.

These variations suggest that Lawrence's sense of his needs as an artist change in the aesthetically-rejuvenating atmosphere of the western art colony. Here was an alternative model of

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<sup>39</sup> Lawrence, 'New Mexico', p. 96.

<sup>40</sup> James C. Cowan, *D. H. Lawrence's American Journey: A Study in Literature and Myth* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970).

<sup>41</sup> Tom Lutz, *Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Laura Doyle 'Towards a Philosophy of Transnationalism', *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 1 (2009), 1-29.

community which could satisfy the writer's desires for both settlement and autonomy. In his final revision of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, completed in Taos in 1922, Lawrence asserts:

Men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. [...] Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, *believing* community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose. Not when they are escaping to some wild west.<sup>42</sup>

This is a further departure from the isolated 'bright west' previously envisioned, and even from the distant 'cube-crystals of houses', as Lawrence now speaks of 'men' – in the plural – needing a 'homeland' of connectedness. Here, in the Taos art colony, was a distinct possibility for this new mode of community. As a collection of diverse individuals, a meeting ground of varied and often mutating views and experiences, the network of temporary association could reconcile his contradictory desires to be alone and to be part of a community. Lawrence could control the level of interaction with this community precisely because there was no consensus as to participation in the life of the colony. Critics have noted Lawrence's interest in the 'cross-pollination' between people, rather than in boundaries and divisions between them, a description comparable to James Clifford's spaces of overlapping interaction.<sup>43</sup> After all, Lawrence could have moved further away, ensured complete isolation and lived the life of a hermit. But instead he buys a property from the person he declares to vehemently dislike, urges two Danish artists to buy the ranch next door, and accepts visits from the likes of Johnson, Witter Bynner and Willa Cather.<sup>44</sup>

For Lawrence, isolation is not sufficient to create meaningful experience: there must also be the requisite sense of connectedness to a community. In a retrospective essay on his time in New Mexico, Lawrence explains:

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<sup>42</sup> D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (London: Secker, 1924), p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Virginia Crosswhite Hyde, "'Terra Incognita': D. H. Lawrence at the Frontiers", in *'Terra Incognita': D. H. Lawrence at the Frontiers*, ed. by Crosswhite Hyde and Earl G. Ingersoll (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), pp. 13-25 (p.16).

<sup>44</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, *D. H. Lawrence: A Biography* (New York: Cooper Square, 1990), p. 290.

We skim along, we get there, we see it all. [...] Poor creatures that we are, we crave for experience, yet we are like flies that crawl on the pure and transparent mucous-paper in which the world like a bon-bon is wrapped so carefully that we can never get at it, though we see it there all the time as we move about it, apparently in contact, yet actually as far removed as if it were the moon. [...] But] the moment I saw the brilliant, proud morning shine high up over the deserts of Santa Fe, something stood still in my soul.<sup>45</sup>

After flitting between rejected locales, Lawrence stopped 'skim[ming] along' and finally 'stood still'. By satisfying his complex requirements for community, the Taos art colony provided Lawrence with the possibility of breaking through the metaphorical 'mucous-paper' and make real 'contact'. Setting up home in New Mexico, in a ranch separated from yet connected to other art-colonists, Lawrence could punctuate his frequent movements with a sense of belonging, and could balance his desire for isolation with participation in the life of the colony.

### Associations

The establishment of places to live and formal associations by some colonists evokes a more political understanding of community: asserting common ground. In *The Inoperative Community* Jean-Luc Nancy describes how a community is composed in the shared experience of radical individuals:

Thinking of community as essence – is in effect the closure of the political. Such thinking constitutes closure because it assigns to community a *common* being, whereas community is a matter of something quite different, namely, of existence inasmuch as it is *in* common, but without letting itself be absorbed into a common substance.<sup>46</sup>

Nancy's definition dispenses with assumptions of sameness and generalizations about the shared qualities of a group. Instead, communities such as art colonies can be defined as a group of diverse people brought together and bonded in a sphere of association; linked by 'overlapping webs of

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<sup>45</sup> Lawrence, 'New Mexico', pp. 95-96.

<sup>46</sup> Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, p. xxxviii.

relation'.<sup>47</sup> It is in the interaction of these moving figures and in the creation of these transient environments that the community of the western art colony can be better understood. Following this line of thinking allows colonists to be attached to a location, belong to an association and even make a home, while still remaining unconstrained. Both of these patterns of behaviour, setting up home and involvement with collective endeavours, highlight colonists' desires to engage with the colony environment. The ability to manage one's engagement is to this extent different from James Clifford's fleeting encounters of merely passing through between journeys. A sense of 'standing still' was as important as a sense of being in frequent if not constant movement.

Whether their presence in the southwest was permanent or temporary, group formations constituted a permanent acknowledgment of an artist's place within the art colony community. Here I look at two groups in order to explicate this pattern of behaviour and explore its function within the non-traditional model of community at western art colonies. Often given a name and a specific agenda by members, these groups allowed an artist to confirm his or her presence and signalled a desire to be actively involved in the art colony community. By synthesizing information from a range of sources, I present histories of these two groups in order to shed light on these activities and highlight the opportunity for a sense of belonging which they afforded artists in these colonies. Both of these groups have heretofore remained unexamined by critics. Like most experiences of these places, groups ranged considerably and I have chosen two distinct types: one an informal poetry group and the other a group formation of a southwestern printing press. Although they differ in many ways, together they suggest the style of group that formed in these colonies, the motivations which fuelled them, and the appeal they held for art-colonists. However temporary their stay in New Mexico might be, artists participated in groups which made them feel part of a wider association; something restorative as well as shared and productive.

Reflecting on artistic activities in the southwest in a 1949 issue of *New Mexican Quarterly*, historian Dudley Wynn emphasizes the idea of colony retreat and its restorative opportunities:

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<sup>47</sup> Berman, *Modernist Fiction*, p. 16.

Sunshine and adobes! How easy it is to fall uncritically into the escapist frame of mind! No harm, perhaps, if the critical sense only remembers that escape can take at least two forms, a shrugging of the shoulders and a closing of the eyes, or a retreat for the purpose of straightening oneself out inside.<sup>48</sup>

For many art-colonists, the retreat to New Mexico was initially a matter of physically 'straightening oneself out'. Those seeking the restoration of their health in New Mexican sanatoriums felt themselves to be aided by the warm, dry southwestern climate and magnificent landscapes. However, this often led to social interactions which were similarly restorative in terms of 'straightening oneself out inside', as in Witter Bynner's comment on the forms of interaction germinating in the healthful environment of Sunmount sanatorium and, in particular, with one of its most famous residents:

Alice [Corbin] brewed her own coffee, and we would gather nightly in her room for gay, swift talk and forbidden cigarettes. [...] Finally even the head doctor would be there and almost grant that these trespasses upon rule were doing his patient good.<sup>49</sup>

This sociality, this propensity for temporary residents to band together in 'gay, swift talk' continued after Alice Corbin's time at Sunmount and underpinned many of the collaborative activities present in western art colonies. Corbin had been at the centre of Chicago's artistic scene through her work as co-editor of *Poetry* magazine. She was a creative, social and dedicated figure in this scene, thanks to her contacts through the magazine and her professional reputation, while at the same time being a wife and mother. Despite her initial reservations about moving to New Mexico, Corbin quickly saw the attraction to the region and Santa Fe's potential for a kind of group incorporating a sense of solitude and space amongst awe inspiring landscapes and intriguing local cultures, alongside camaraderie with a dynamic group of artists. Here she could continue writing, editing and publishing

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<sup>48</sup> Dudley Wynn, 'The Humanities in the Southwest', *New Mexico Quarterly*, 19 (1949), 5-17 (p. 16).

<sup>49</sup> Witter Bynner, 'Alice and I', *New Mexico Quarterly*, 19 (1949), 35-42 (p. 37). During this period the healing air of the southwest was much publicized and much assumed: the popular Sunmount sanatorium, where Corbin took up residence, touted its benefit to 'those requiring the exceptional advantages of Santa Fe climate'. Promotional pamphlet in Weigle and Fiore, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 154.



in a place she found to be physically and artistically invigorating. Rather than giving up what she had in the city, as she had once feared, she found room to be an artist, publisher, socialite, wife, mother, and activist amongst artistic and intellectual friends and acquaintances.

Bynner goes on to explain how, once Corbin and her family had settled in their small adobe home, the development of social activity picked up where the Sunmount gatherings had left off:

Soon life continued around Big Alice very much as it had done farther up the hill: intimate gatherings, tea, coffee, cigarettes, white mule, and talk, talk, talk. At the sanatorium, we had often read poetry to one another, poetry established and poetry our own. Now, with mainly practitioners present, poetry and painting took further sway.<sup>50</sup>

The evolution of this group activity attests to the intellectually and artistically invigorating atmosphere of the western art colony. Colonists' propensity to develop groups in a somewhat unconscious, organic manner is suggestive of their desire to utilize the colony's opportunities for artistic improvisation and peer criticism.

In this way Corbin anchored the art colony community in Santa Fe, aiding artists' sense of affiliation and creating a focal point for group formations just as her home served as a meeting ground for visiting artists. In Haniel Long's summation, 'Alice Corbin is definitely a group person', while Spud Johnson recalls that the 'old Henderson house' was 'perhaps the humblest on the road, yet it always sparkled with warm generosity and always swarmed with celebrities or neighbours, quite indiscriminately'.<sup>51</sup> Evenings spent at the Corbin-Henderson home were very much the norm, with an assortment of guests present on any given night. Building on diversions at Sunmount, dinner

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<sup>50</sup> Bynner, 'Alice and I', p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> Haniel Long, 'The Poets' Round-Up', *New Mexico Quarterly*, 19 (1949), 66-72 (p. 69); Spud Johnson, 'The Rabble', *New Mexico Quarterly*, 19 (1949), 72-75 (p. 72). Long, who became a prominent contemporary poet, had become Bynner's friend and sometimes lover when they were students together at Harvard. Having spent a considerable amount of time visiting Bynner in Santa Fe in the 1920s he finally moved to Santa Fe in 1929 seeking the nourishing conditions which would ease his tuberculosis and, possibly, a psychological 'breakdown'. Long initially intended only to stay while on sabbatical from his job as Head of English at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, but ended up staying permanently. His most famous works resulting from his time in New Mexico are two poetry collections, *Atlantides* (Santa Fe: Writers' Editions, 1933) and *Pittsburgh Memoranda* (Santa Fe: Writers' Editions, 1935), and the 1936 novella *Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca* (Santa Fe: Writers' Editions, 1936), an imaginative retelling of the experiences of the Spanish explorer. Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies*, p. 134.

was often followed by a favourite game which involved composing sonnets from an assortment of given words. But, as Johnson recalls, an informal parlour game soon developed into a routine of creative activity:

It started all of us into a new frenzy of writing. Soon we were bringing things we had written during the week to try out on each other, or to ask for criticisms and suggestions; and our gatherings tended to become a weekly event, and to be limited to writers, rather than a mixed group of painters, summer visitors, musicians and what not.<sup>52</sup>

Johnson's description reinforces the organic quality of the groups which formed in these places and emphasizes colonists' inclination to work collaboratively. There was no self-conscious attempt to cultivate this association; instead it emerged from the social life of the place. As Bynner wrote, 'This sort of interchange was good teasing, good questioning, good fun. [...] It was good for us'.<sup>53</sup> The group also provided, in Johnson's words, 'that little push of incentive that group activity at its best, can supply so painlessly'.<sup>54</sup> So enjoyable and conducive to artistic production were these little meetings that soon 'it came about, quite naturally, and with no plan at all, that we were meeting every week, generally at the Hendersons; and before we knew it, we were "A Club"'.<sup>55</sup> Outlining the history of this 'club' elucidates that colonists were not ships passing in the night; they were not isolated individuals all pursuing individual paths in the southwest. When they were there they played their part in something bigger: they formed small groups which echoed their feeling of affiliation with the wider colony group.

Conscious affiliation with such formalized 'club[s]' provides an example of how the colony's network of people interacted and the satisfaction colonists gained from such collective endeavours. Dubbed 'The Rabble', in a nod to sixteenth-century French satirist François Rabelais, the group assembled in a small building behind the Corbin-Henderson house from the mid-1920s:

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<sup>52</sup> Johnson, 'The Rabble', p. 73.

<sup>53</sup> Bynner, 'Alice and I', p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson, 'The Rabble', p. 73.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

[The group] seemed to lapse so often into a Rabelaisian mood, that soon we were referring to ourselves as the Rabelais Club, which was quickly altered, since that sounded much too stodgy, to the simple informality of 'The Rabble'.<sup>56</sup>

Bestowing a name on what had been informal dinner chat allowed colonists to identify themselves as members of a group even when they were not present at the colony, and to assert affiliation without compromising opportunities for movement.

Situated away from Corbin's main house in an adjacent field, the small adobe building which served as The Rabble's clubhouse incorporated the colony's artistic milieu into the southwest's natural grandeur. Sparsely furnished with a table and chairs, its walls were covered in bookshelves full of books of poems or about poetry. A fireplace bestowed cosiness while large windows at each end provided generous views of the surrounding landscape. Long later recalled:

I have always had a special fondness for the adobe room where the books were so near, so quickly picked out and used, and where the moon and the large stars and the winds and odors of fields were a part of our deliberations.<sup>57</sup>

This, literally immersed in both the landscape and in poetry, was where The Rabble would meet for lively discussion and peer criticism.

Although consisting primarily of Corbin, Bynner, Long, Johnson and young playwright Lynn Riggs, this shared enterprise was not exclusive. In addition to these core members, Bynner notes that there were many 'others joining occasionally'.<sup>58</sup> As Johnson's descriptions suggest, collaborations in western art colonies were fluid and accommodated temporary associations. Of the social contact he experienced in Taos, for instance, Paul Horgan writes that:

The artistic aspirant attaches an extra, rather touching, value to mingling with his elders in the world of the arts, not always to learn anything technical – that is a different and quite

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<sup>56</sup> Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup> Long, 'The Poets' Round-Up', p. 68.

<sup>58</sup> Bynner, 'Alice and I', p. 41.

strict process – but often to breathe a climate and absorb justification for his own often socially unorthodox values.<sup>59</sup>

Riggs, The Rabble's youngest member, was thus afforded the opportunity to socialize and artistically collaborate with more accomplished artists. This was not, for most colonists, a coming-of-age space: western art colonies did not operate as a stage of artistic maturation. Bynner was forty-one when he moved to Santa Fe and, like Corbin, Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan, was a generation older than many other colonists. Rather than a formative space in a young artist's development, the colony milieu offered artists opportunities for a feeling often described as an aesthetic rejuvenation. Affiliation with the art colony meant support and encouragement whatever an artist's age or career stage. Riggs' time in New Mexico was induced more by his circumstances than his age.

At the tender age of twenty-four, Riggs thought he 'might have come to Santa Fe to die' from ailments ambiguously diagnosed as either consumption or severe depression.<sup>60</sup> Yet, as it transpired, 'Santa Fe was about to teach him how to live'.<sup>61</sup> Like Corbin and other art-colonists, Riggs soon found respite in the western art colony milieu and made a swift recovery. His biographer notes that psychological ailments were relieved by Santa Fe's 'unique qualities': Riggs was now part of a community which 'accepted the artistic, sensitive person and excused individual idiosyncrasies', concluding that 'Santa Fe's free acceptance buoyed his spirit, stifled from a youth spent in a home filled with rejection and criticism'.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, shortly after arriving in Santa Fe Riggs declared to Bynner: 'you saved my life, you know – to Humanity the burden'.<sup>63</sup> There were, of course, other artistic groups in other regions which fostered aesthetic experimentation and which could assuage

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<sup>59</sup> Paul Horgan, *Approaches to Writing* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), pp. 220-21. Horgan moved from Buffalo to Albuquerque at the age of twelve for his father's ill health. During his formative years he spent time at the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies, experiences which influenced his later literary career. Much of his acclaimed fiction concerned the southwest as a region both historically and imaginatively. He won two Pulitzer prizes and also found success with poetry, drama and children's stories. Robert Gish, *Paul Horgan* (Boston: Twayne, 1983).

<sup>60</sup> Braunlich, *Haunted by Home*, p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

an artist's sense of inadequacy. But the western art colony offered something different. It was perceived to be far removed from New York's artistic marketplace which thus removed some of the pressures of performance and saleability. For Riggs, this separation from the urban art market heralded a changed philosophy of literature: repudiating F. Scott Fitzgerald and praising Willa Cather he asserted that 'art never thrives in a sophisticated hothouse' and he wrote a string of poems and plays which found contemporary prestige as well as securing his lasting legacy with the musical *Oklahoma*.<sup>64</sup>

Removal from environments perceived to be aesthetically stifling provided participants with space to explore new aesthetic ideas. In addition to these social amenities, many found inspiration in the awesome landscapes and culturally diverse local populations which had found a mainstream audience since Ernest Blumenschein, Bert Geer Phillips and their fellow artists starting producing paintings in the region. The popularity of southwestern themes was later reinforced by the success of southwestern writings from the likes of Austin, Cather and Harvey Fergusson. Many artists and writers in these art colonies utilized the opportunities borne of New Mexico's commercial reputation, particularly in terms of involvement with railway promotional materials. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway helped promote many Anglo-American artists in New Mexico. Painters like E. Irving Couse, for instance, produced paintings for the railway's calendars throughout this period while Gerald Cassidy received recognition when his paintings won the grand prize at an Indian arts exhibit co-sponsored by the railway. Writers, too, were involved in these endeavours. In 1928 the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway published *They Know New Mexico: Intimate Sketches by Western Writers* with contributions from Corbin, Bynner, Austin and Elizabeth Willis de Huff.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Letter Riggs to Betty Kirk, 24 July 1924, quoted in Braunlich, *Haunted by Home*, p. 17; Edna Robertson and Sarah Nestor, *Artists of the Canyons and Caminos: Santa Fe, Early Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Ancient City Press, 2006), p. 116.

<sup>65</sup> Victoria E. Dye, *All Aboard for Santa Fe: Railway Promotion of the Southwest, 1890s to 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), pp. 41-42; Marta Weigle and Barbara A. Babcock, *The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 1996), p. 55; *They Know New Mexico: Intimate Sketches by Western Writers* (Chicago: Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1928).

Although Santa Fe had developed this reputable art market by the 1920s, participation in these art colonies was not a logical step towards artistic recognition and, as such, artists did not move to New Mexican art colonies in expectation of success. Since presence at the art colony did not automatically translate into commercial success, the light-hearted creativity of groups like The Rabble had a practical agenda too:

We were quite serious about it, yet gay, too. It was a workshop group, and we were all using it to try out new things, to get an advance reaction before sending things into the bleak world of terse rejection slips.<sup>66</sup>

Many colonists sought to create opportunities for artistic recognition which could augment the type of works they produced for the Santa Fe Railroad and the Fred Harvey Company, for instance. Seeking recognition for writing which they felt might be lost in the 'bleak world of terse rejection slips', some colonists worked on the local publication of 'good books that otherwise might not see the light of day'.<sup>67</sup> Established in Santa Fe in 1932 by a group of writers who 'participated in editorial and business decision[s] and who lived within hollering distance of one another', this was another endeavour in which Corbin took a lynchpin role: coordinating and incorporating many sporadic visitors who passed through her home and through the Santa Fe art colony.<sup>68</sup> It enabled a group of colonists to make decisions which enacted control over their work and the manner in which it was produced, published and distributed. The decisions concerned Writers' Editions, a publishing house dedicated to writing produced by art-colonists in New Mexico. Something of a 'southwestern phenomenon', Writers' Editions comprised a group of writers who presented work for publication, financially underwrote their own and often others' publications, and acted as editorial board before assisting with design, book binding and printing to produce a series of elegant limited edition

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<sup>66</sup> Johnson, 'The Rabble', p. 74.

<sup>67</sup> Haniel Long and Walter Goodwin, 'The Rydal Press of Santa Fe, New Mexico: A Brief Account of its History and Its Purpose', in *The Annual of Book Making* (New York: The Colophon, 1938), unnumbered p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Peggy Pond Church, 'Writers' Editions, 1933-1939: Some Distant Recollections', *Book Talk*, 11 (1982), 3-6 (p. 3).

books.<sup>69</sup> This comprehensive approach gives evidence of colonists' desire to treat work fostered by the colony milieu in a particular way. Initially the brainchild of Corbin, Bynner, Long and writer Peggy Pond Church, the press grew to include more than twenty elected members between its inception in 1932 and disbanding in 1941.<sup>70</sup> Fittingly, the press's original home had once been a health ranch for tuberculosis sufferers. Originally based in this ranch house just outside of Santa Fe, the press moved to larger premises in 1937.<sup>71</sup> Now in 'Santa Fe proper', it was housed in an adobe building which offered the added advantage of regulating temperatures in the print room.<sup>72</sup> Like the adobe building which housed The Rabble, Writers' Editions' headquarters further explicates the role of group formations in western art colonies. Writers' Editions extends the aims of The Rabble, augmenting colonists' feeling of involvement in a collective endeavour with a public declaration of the satisfaction experienced in the colony milieu.

The colonists involved in this truly collaborative endeavour had the chance to see their works 'fittingly presented'.<sup>73</sup> The publishing house's high production values are evident in the weight and texture of pages, for instance, as well as the tactile quality of the outer binding. A typeface was even imported from England in a bid to distinguish Writers' Editions from other American publishing houses.<sup>74</sup> Every process and decision had been carefully deliberated; producing books which appeal as much in form as content. In this way colonists demonstrated and celebrated the artistic invigoration they experienced in the colony milieu, seeking to complement the vitality of their writing with similarly gratifying materiality.

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<sup>69</sup> Jack Rittenhouse, 'Southwest Imprints: Writers' Editions', *Book Talk*, 4 (1975), 3-4 (p. 3).

<sup>70</sup> Peggy Pond Church moved with her family to New Mexico at the age of ten and to Santa Fe two years later. She interacted with art-colonists throughout her adult life, particularly Corbin and Long. Sharon Snyder, *A Home on the Slopes of Mountains: The Story of Peggy Pond Church* (Los Alamos: Los Alamos Historical Society, 2011). Her first two books, *Foretaste* (1933) and *Familiar Journey* (1936), were both published by Writers' Editions but she is probably best remembered for her memoir *A House at Otowi Bridge* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1960). Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> Long and Goodwin, 'The Rydal Press', unnumbered p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, unnumbered p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Rittenhouse, 'Southwest Imprints', p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Long and Goodwin, 'The Rydal Press', unnumbered p. 3.

Yet high production values were also tempered by the group's promotional agenda: 'The original intention was to make books which were not to fall in the deluxe price class yet had sufficient care taken in their making to give them a pleasing and permanent dress'.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, an article relating the history and purpose of the press declares 'bulking books and very precious books' to be Writers' Editions' 'two pet abominations'.<sup>76</sup> This considered approach was at the heart of operations not least because of Writers' Editions' commercial impetus. Colonists sought recognition of southwestern-produced works: the more accessible the books, the wider the recognition they could garner.

This stance proved well-merited and, although relatively short-lived, Writers' Editions succeeded in establishing the southwest as an American artistic centre. Colonists declared their presence in the southwest and their affiliation to the western art colony. Two of its books, for instance, were included in the prestigious 'Fifty Books of the Year' list, the first from New Mexico to receive this honour.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, as well as his championing of Writers' Editions' cooperative and democratic spirit, Long's colony-produced writing comprised some of the press' most successful publications. His 1933 poetry collection *Atlantides*, for instance, was published as a limited edition of 250 signed copies, while Church declares his 1936 novella *Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca* to be Writers' Editions most famous publication:

[Without the] cooperative efforts of Writers' Editions, this jewel might never have attracted its subsequent wide audience. It does not fit into any literary category. It is not even certain in my mind whether it should be library-shelved as prose or poetry. [...] What conventional publisher would have risked bringing out such a book by a relatively unknown writer inhabiting the equally unknown – at least to the eastern literary establishment –, the Indian and cactus inhabited southwest?<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., unnumbered pp. 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., unnumbered p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> John Gould Fletcher's *XXIV Elegies* made the list in 1936 and Gustave Baumann's *Frijoles Canyon Pictographs* in 1941. Rittenhouse, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Church, 'Writers' Editions', p. 5.



Church's sentiments reinforce efforts undertaken to gain recognition for the southwest as a region and the western art colony as an artistically-collaborative space. In an essay championing the motives behind the publishing house, Long articulates the group's desire to challenge the general feeling that 'a commercial system gags a writer because he is not a good risk' and that, as such, the creative atmosphere which was so appealing to colonists also meant that 'behind the private press [of Writers' Editions] is the stored-up energy of writers incapable in some or all of their aspects of being good commercial risks'.<sup>79</sup> By publishing their own works, the members of Writers' Editions had the opportunity to provide 'other tests for a book than, will it pay to publish it?' in the hope that 'so informal a method of producing and distributing books will encourage the growth of critical centres outside of New York'.<sup>80</sup> In this way Writers' Editions highlights colonists' belief that the artistic experiments fostered at the art colony were worthy of credit and praise beyond the supportive, collaborative atmosphere of the colony.

Writers' Editions reflects the balance between the individual and the collective, the sense of autonomy and belonging, which is at the heart of the art colony's form of community: 'It was an early practical test of that principle of good living called sharing', as Long's biographer John Slater writes.<sup>81</sup> The press was an explicitly non-profit endeavour. Losses were shared by members and profits were used to publish gifted writers unable to contribute financially. This was an association based on promotion, but not the self-promotion of individuals. The needs and success of each writer were mediated by the collective campaign to promote the New Mexican art colonies. The art colony was grounded in the principle of sharing. Property, physical and imaginative, belongs to the individual artist and utilizes the involvement of other colonists, rather than an idea of communality and its suggestion of everything belonging to everyone. In this way Writers' Editions was an important aspect of the non-traditional model of community, creating a focal point for diverse artists which is reinforced by the group's manifesto: 'Writers' Editions, Inc. is a cooperative group of writers

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<sup>79</sup> Long and Goodwin, 'The Rydal Press', unnumbered p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., unnumbered p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> John Rothwell Slater, *Who Was Haniel Long?* (Rochester, NY: A. Long, 1965), p. 4.

living in the southwest, who believe that regional publication will foster the growth of American literature'.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to note that this type of collaborative, cooperative activity was not ubiquitous at western art colonies. Rivalries, tempestuous relationships and the occasional clash of egos often undermined cooperation. Bynner and Long, for instance, had a long but fraught friendship, while disparaging opinions of Luhan often saw her satirized in colony-produced writing.<sup>83</sup> Allegiances and associations could be fluid, short lived, and might not engage the entire art colony. What they highlight instead is colonists' predilection for banding together in collaborative activities as a mark of their presence in the colony. Long eloquently articulates this specific group thus:

[This is a group] in which the end is simply to be with friendly spirits who share one's interests and enthusiasms. [... This] means not trying to control the atmosphere of one's group, and not using it as a place to show off. It means paying others an attention full of perceptiveness of them as individuals.<sup>84</sup>

This is the crux of the matter. Groups which formed in Santa Fe and Taos, like the general colony milieu, did not require uniformity or communality. Instead the western art colony constituted a shared space where artists came together even if only temporarily.

## Homes

Colony homes acted as important nodes in this transient network, reinforcing the sense of belonging provided by group affiliations with a sense of putting down roots in a place. Punctuating colonists' independent and diverse movements, homes provided a sense of 'standing still' within this network of movement. Inclination towards group activities and the importance of colony homes both attest to the attraction artists felt to the southwest as a region and the satisfaction afforded by managing

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<sup>82</sup> Haniel Long, *Walt Whitman and the Springs of Courage* (Santa Fe: Writers' Editions, 1938), epigraph.

<sup>83</sup> James Kraft, ed., *The Works of Witter Bynner* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981), p. 29. Luhan is satirized in Bynner's *Cake: An Indulgence* (New York: Knopf, 1926) and Fergusson's *Footloose McGarnigal*, amongst others.

<sup>84</sup> Long, 'The Poet's Roundup', p. 72.

their engagement with the art colony. The homes of Mabel Dodge Luhan and Alice Corbin in particular acted as lynchpins for these communities and often provided an initial link for new arrivals. I want to focus on these homes here since both were critical in establishing bonds between colonists and visitors at their respective art colonies. Sojourns in these places were often the first colony experiences for artists and prompted many to make the colonies their home too. Equally, these homes, in their very design and conception, referenced the blending of the ancient and the modern: Native American architecture was employed as a shared American past in order to create new, more satisfying Anglo-American communities. Colonist homes were early and influential examples of the Pueblo Revival style of architecture which became prevalent in New Mexican art colonies.<sup>85</sup> The emulation of Native American architecture makes these houses useful reference points in the study of the western art colony, as they reflect both their owners' tastes and the interests of the wider art colony community.

Colony-produced art was significantly influenced by local geography and culture, with colonists in Santa Fe and Taos paying particular attention to what they perceived to be a pleasing relationship between the two. Painters often accentuated the rounded, undulating forms so distinctive in New Mexican landscapes in both representations of the landscape and the homes of local communities. In *New Mexico Recollection No. 13* (figure 1; p. 146), a painting from his time at the Taos art colony, Marsden Hartley depicts the southwestern landscape as a series of softly undulating peaks in the foreground, middle ground and distance. The rich colour palette heightens a sense of the desert's arid heat, while smooth lines reinforce the organicism of these hills which seem to seamlessly emerge from the similarly curved desert floor. Heightening these swells almost to abstraction emphasizes the modernist aesthetic experiments conducted by colonists through southwestern subject matter, while also underlining the distinctiveness of topographical features abundantly evident around Santa Fe and Taos (figure 2; p. 146).

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<sup>85</sup> David Gebhard, 'The Myth and Power of Place: Hispanic Revivalism in the American Southwest', in *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*, ed. by Nicholas C. Markovich, Wolfgang F. E. Preiser and Fred G. Sturm (New York: Van Nostrand Reinold, 1990), pp. 143-58 (p. 148).

Georgia O'Keeffe reinforces these notions in her paintings of New Mexican dwellings, highlighting the fact that they, too, seem to emerge organically from the landscape and replicate its soft, rounded shapes. She devotes the foreground of *Taos Pueblo*, and almost half the painting, to the desert floor. The stacked homes behind subsequently maintain a sense of connection and balance with their location (figure 3; p. 147).<sup>86</sup> The ideas artistically expressed in such paintings are also evident in colonists' real-life homes. Construction choices reflect how art-colonists were influenced by local geography and culture, often seeking to emulate a version of homemaking which mediated the inside and outside as well as a form of community where engagement with others could be managed. When constructing a home it was common to build a guesthouse first which the owners could live in while the rest of the house was constructed.<sup>87</sup> As well as the practical benefit, this meant owners always had room for guests staying for short periods of time, meaning that colony homes could foster the art colony's sense of dualism between movement and settlement. This reveals a social element to construction choices as well as architectural design. Elements including design and size reveal much about their owners' style as well as their place within the colony. As nuclei of these respective art colonies, for instance, both Corbin and Luhan needed to expand their homes in order to keep up with demands on their hospitality. This was also true of Witter Bynner, whose role as the social centre of the Santa Fe colony was matched by the gradual expansion of his small adobe house. Bynner became the 'social cement' of New Mexican art colonies, throwing parties 'which drew aesthetes from both the Santa Fe and Taos colonies', and included 'guests from all groups and cliques'.<sup>88</sup> Homes like Bynner's, Corbin's and Luhan's were extended to host more travelling visitors and reinforce their role as a meeting ground for disparate colonists. Setting up home at the art colony did not preclude further movement, mutation and adaptation. Homeowners engaged in a process of development supported by the coming and going

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<sup>86</sup> See also the discussion of O'Keeffe's and others' depictions of Ranchos Church in Chapter Three, which similarly manipulate subject matter to emphasise these qualities.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Harris, *Santa Fe: America's Guide for Architecture and History Travelers* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies*, p. 186.

of other art-colonists. Visitors, meanwhile, were afforded a temporary sense of being at home. On one of her earliest trips to Taos, for instance, O'Keeffe declared 'I never feel at home in the East like I do out here – and feeling like I'm in the right place again'.<sup>89</sup> Whether they established a place to live or stayed at a fellow colonist's home, houses and a sense of being at home were vital elements of the art colony experience, even for the many that were only temporarily resident.

The establishment of a home at the art colony was not necessarily initially planned. When Corbin was prescribed her period of recuperation in a New Mexico sanatorium to ease her tuberculosis she felt that she had been 'thrown out into the desert to die, like a piece of old scrap-iron, or a rusty Ford'.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly invoking a metaphor of inhibited movement, Corbin established a home that fostered the art colony's mode of community: a home that accommodated connectedness to other artists and was spatially appropriate to this kind of group. Corbin had been at Sunmount mere weeks when she urged friend and poet Carl Sandburg to travel to New Mexico with descriptions of the 'sand-combed valley to the west', the 'mesas rising out of it' and the 'snow-capped Sangre de Cristo range'.<sup>91</sup> Sandburg was the first of a plethora of acquaintances to heed Corbin's invitation over the coming years, many of whom enjoyed Corbin's hospitality sporadically and some of whom settled in the art colony permanently. Amongst friends and artists in this awe-inspiring landscape, her engagement with the locality quickly mutated from brief respite to lasting residence; from a place to visit into a place to settle.<sup>92</sup> Her Santa Fe home reflected this mutation, expanding to accommodate increasing numbers of guests and utilizing aspects of Native American architecture which suggested a balance between private and communal life. Her husband, William

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<sup>89</sup> Letter O'Keeffe to Henry McBride, summer 1929, quoted in Ethel S. Goodstein, 'Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexico: The Artist's Vision of the Land and Its Architecture', in *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*, ed. by Markovich, Preiser and Sturm, pp. 225-36 (p. 228).

<sup>90</sup> Lois Rudnick, 'Introduction', in *Red Earth: Poems of New Mexico*, by Alice Corbin, comp. and ed. by Lois Rudnick and Ellen Zieselman (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2003), pp. 13-38 (p. 20).

<sup>91</sup> Pearce, *Alice Corbin Henderson*, p. 13. Sandburg heeded Corbin's letter, visited Santa Fe and gave readings of his poetry at Sunmount. His time in Santa Fe influenced poems such as 'Santa Fe Sketches' and 'Alice Corbin Is Gone'. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Corbin and her family remained resident in New Mexico from 1916 until her death in 1949. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 28.

Penhallow Henderson, an acclaimed architect as well as established painter, extended the small property they purchased with adobe bricks that he made by hand. Rooms were added to the sides and rear of the property, and a *portal* (a narrow porch) was added which provided an outside space for socializing with passing artists.

The same features are evident in the house Luhan erected nearby in Taos: shunning modern materials for traditional adobe and featuring the earth tones, flat roofs and rounded corners characteristic of nearby Taos Pueblo emphasized the distinctiveness of the southwestern landscape which, in turn, emphasized art-colonists' feeling of inhabiting somewhere unique.<sup>93</sup> Equally, like Corbin, Luhan's original purchase was a small three room adobe which underwent extensive additions, responding to and appropriating New Mexico's local geography and lived cultures. An elevated solarium was constructed to benefit from uninhibited views of the surrounding landscape as well as a large dining room, conducive to gathering guests. A traditional *portal* provided a communal outside space connecting myriad guest houses which together imitated the tiered structure of Taos Pueblo homes.<sup>94</sup> Only a short distance from the pueblo, Los Gallos' imitation of the multi-storey construction of its adobe dwellings celebrates Luhan's accommodation of sporadic visitors as well as the region's visual distinctiveness.<sup>95</sup> Luhan's succession of houses reflects the stages of her life. After the untimely death of her first husband, Luhan lived in Florence with her second husband, Edwin Dodge, in a grand classical villa which became a home away from home for many European and American artists. Returning to New York estranged from Dodge, Luhan established herself in a townhouse in the heart of Greenwich Village. Here her weekly salon drew an impressive and eclectic group of the era's movers and shakers. After being enticed to visit New Mexico by her third husband, Maurice Sterne, Luhan built Los Gallos as a similar expression of her

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<sup>93</sup> Construction on the property began in 1918, at the same time that Corbin's Santa Fe home was undergoing expansion. Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 156.

<sup>94</sup> By the time the estate was completed it comprised seventeen rooms, five guesthouses, stables, barns, corrals and servants' quarters housed in a separate guesthouse. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-58.

<sup>95</sup> For Anglo-Americans in New Mexico, including art-colonists, Pueblo buildings held inherent values like functionalism, simplicity and an affinity with nature. The perceived organicism of Pueblo structures is achieved through both form and material. Harris, *Santa Fe*, p. 113.

passions and sensibilities. All of these homes were doggedly in keeping with the architecture and ambience of their locations and reinforce Luhan's thirst for engagement with people: husbands at home, artists constantly visiting, and local communities all around.

In Taos this included a connection to the land itself. As adobe bricks are formed of the local mud, there is no material distinction between the house and the ground. These bricks are then assembled into solid blocks and often placed in a stepped massing to produce the graduated outline exemplified by Los Gallos. Strong, solid structures built of adobe bricks subsequently had the appearance of emerging 'naturally' out of the ground while also echoing the shape of the colonies' mountain backdrop. It is understandable, then, that staying with Luhan in Taos, O'Keeffe praised her host for what she had 'dug up out of the earth', though, as Lois Rudnick explains, adobe was not favoured by local people for its aesthetic appeal or its association with the New Mexican landscape but because it was cheap:

Adobe guarantees its charm to the outside observer at the same time it disguises the economic hardship that often lies within. For centuries, adobe was the most democratic of building materials – anyone could afford and use it. (Only recently has adobe construction in the southwest become unaffordable by all but the most affluent.)<sup>96</sup>

The shift described by Rudnick implicates art-colonists in the appropriative imitation which fostered the popularity of Pueblo Revival architecture in New Mexico. The simplicity, straightforward construction and use of natural, local materials favoured by art-colonists in establishing places to live in these colonies were instrumental in this revival, a project which, in some ways, aligns with other contemporary revivalist tendencies. By drawing on the past, architectural revivals evoked a seemingly simpler era.<sup>97</sup> Yet as Barbara Burlison Mooney argues, colonial architecture represented a

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<sup>96</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 37.

<sup>97</sup> Most notable of this trend are the Arts and Crafts Movement which flourished in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe and America, and the Colonial Revival which gained prominence in America during the same era. Architectural historians discuss this Romantic tradition as a reaction against an increasingly urbanized and industrialized society, as well as the cultural standardization this was seen as producing. Chris Wilson, 'New Mexico in the Tradition of Romantic Reaction', in *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*, ed. by Markovich, Preiser and Sturm, pp. 175-94 (p. 175).

‘naïve version of later more complex aesthetic conventions’ whereas Pueblo structures offered a ‘cataclysmic alternative to European academic traditions’.<sup>98</sup> The buildings constructed in western art colonies were not American versions of European architectural styles, but offered an antithesis: a distinctly American-style dwelling. Colonists accessed a uniquely American past which claimed Native American and Hispanic architecture as part of a distinctly American aesthetic. Pueblo Revival structures were exalted as ‘a true product of America’, ‘a strictly American style’ and ‘so directly American’, constituting the first revival of an indigenous American style.<sup>99</sup> A pamphlet published by the Chamber of Commerce, for instance, encouraged visitors by declaring that Santa Fe ‘possesses and is cultivating what no other city in America has – a distinctive type of architecture – [...] producing delightfully artistic results’.<sup>100</sup> This was not a nostalgic desire for the old-fashioned or conventional, but an embrace by Anglo-Americans of what was, to them, at once both different and unfamiliar and with which they could feel connected through a seemingly shared American past. Puebloesque structures like Corbin’s and Luhan’s houses were visual markers of art-colonists’ belief in the specificity of the southwest as a region. Director of the Museum of New Mexico and friend of Corbin and Luhan, Edgar Hewett, claimed victory in his campaign for Pueblo Revival to be the official style of Santa Fe town planning by noting that 90 percent of remodelling and 50 percent of new homes were completed in this mode between 1912 and 1917.<sup>101</sup> Hewett’s speech at the opening of Santa Fe’s State Art Gallery in 1917 emphasized his promotion of this traditional architectural mode:

To the artists and their friends who come to Santa Fe, we extend the age old salutation of our people: ‘This is your house’. To the people of our state, and to all who come to sojourn

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<sup>98</sup> Barbara Burlison Mooney, ‘Sunny Spain or Our Algeria: The Other Colonial Revival’, in *Recreating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. by Richard Guy Wilson, Shaun Eyring and Kenny Marotta (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), pp. 367-89 (p. 379).

<sup>99</sup> Wilson, ‘New Mexico’, p. 179.

<sup>100</sup> Ralph E. Twitchell, *The City Different: Descriptive Guide to Santa Fe and Vicinity* (Santa Fe: Chamber of Commerce, 1913), unnumbered.

<sup>101</sup> Edgar Hewett was an archaeologist and anthropologist instrumental in Native American rights in New Mexico. He was the first director of the Museum of New Mexico and was instrumental in reinvigorating the Santa Fe Fiesta, with which many art-colonists were also involved. Chauvenet, Beatrice, Hewett and Friends: A Biography of Santa Fe’s Vibrant Era (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1983); Maggie Valentine, ‘Architecture’, in *New Mexico*, ed. by Mark Busby (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004), pp. 1-36 (p. 30).



among us, we say: 'There is time in the life of everyone for quiet enjoyment of the things of the spirit. That is the purpose of this place. We invite you to make this your sanctuary.'<sup>102</sup>

By invoking a rhetoric that linked homes and dwellings to feelings of restful escape Hewett reinforces the connection between Pueblo architecture and the appeal of the region for art-colonists.<sup>103</sup>

As with their unscripted movements, art-colonists picked and chose the styles of their southwestern dwellings. Nicolai Fechin's Taos house, for instance, incorporates a striking combination of the painter's Russian background and indigenous New Mexican design elements: a visual metaphor of the culture he brought with him, the routes that brought him to New Mexico and the roots he put down in the Taos art colony.<sup>104</sup> But while such homes provided a flexible space for private sanctuary and welcoming other Anglo colonists, they nonetheless enacted a troubling appropriation of non-Anglo cultures. Unlike utilizing the modern car to access primitive southwestern history and thus generating a more satisfying southwestern experience, colonists exhibited a problematic selectivity towards Pueblo culture. Colonists combined aspects of this unfamiliar mode of dwelling with their own Anglo-influenced preferences, as aspects of Pueblo style were incorporated into buildings alongside other styles and modern conveniences. When O'Keeffe purchased the Abiquiu mission in 1945 she remodelled the building in traditional adobe but also felt

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<sup>102</sup> Transcript 'On Opening the State Art Gallery, Santa Fe, November, 1917', Edgar L. Hewett Collection, Box 12.

<sup>103</sup> Remodelling in 1912 saw the Palace of the Governors, the home of Hewett's museum, restored to its 1770s appearance rather than its original design to augment this sense of regionalist pride. Dominating one side of Santa Fe's central plaza, the renovated palace featured a Pueblo-shaped courtyard, flat roof, adobe walls and corbelled colonnade (an ornate covered walkway) which were deemed to exhibit the most 'appropriate architectural image for the region' (Valentine, p. 30). The style was similarly adopted by the University of New Mexico whose Hodgin Hall administration building was redesigned from a Romanesque mansion to Puebloesque adobe to reflect president William G. Tight's assertion that university life was 'communal and similar to Pueblo life in its living arrangements and ceremonial requirements'. Jerilou Hammett, Kingsley H. Hammett and Peter Scholz, *The Essence of Santa Fe: From a Way of Life to a Style* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 2006), p. 151; Paul R. Secord, *Images of America: Albuquerque Deco and Pueblo* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2012), p. 20.

<sup>104</sup> Another art-colonist whose presence in the southwest was prompted by tuberculosis treatment, Fechin moved to Taos in 1927. He spent the following years creating paintings of southwestern landscapes and Native American subjects as well as enlarging and modifying his adobe home to incorporate a Pueblo porch and Russian-style carved doors according to the artist's own exacting designs. Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, pp. 120-21.

uninhibited in departing from this style. Glass windows were added into the thick adobe walls, for instance, providing more light to accommodate her painting.<sup>105</sup> Luhan was also keen to incorporate modern amenities: her grand Puebloesque estate was the first house in Taos to boast of modern plumbing.<sup>106</sup> The addition of modern conveniences emphasizes the selective appropriation of this revival.

Since colonists' attitudes shaped their architectural preferences, their homes express the kind of life that artists sought in these colonies. Edging towards modernist ideas, American art underwent a 'stripping away of excess, of anything that got between the individual and experience. The first things to go were the genteel Victorian poetic and artistic conventions, which were considered stale and inauthentic, intrusions on essential reality'.<sup>107</sup> Colonists' homes embody this 'stripping away' as much as their colony-produced art, since aspects of Pueblo Revival architecture were particularly appropriate to the art colony's alternative model of community. The use of natural materials like adobe and wood for traditional *vigas* (beams) together with architectural features like patios and *portals* reinforced this affinity with nature by removing the division of exterior and interior spaces, echoing the colony milieu's balance between individual autonomy and collective community. As Rudnick asserts:

To live in an adobe house was not to close oneself off from the world and assert one's dominance over the elements; rather, it was a means of inhabiting space that broke down the division between inner and outer worlds.<sup>108</sup>

Artists' houses controlled engagement with the landscape as well as with colony milieu, breaking down divisions between individual experiences and a sense of communality, between individual movements and a sense of belonging. Mooney even asserts that Pueblo architecture was adopted by artists as the embodiment of the 'nontraditional' and 'non-normal' as well as a 'safe space of the

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<sup>105</sup> Goodstein, 'Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexico', p. 232.

<sup>106</sup> Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 157.

<sup>107</sup> Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 199.

<sup>108</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 37.

avant garde'.<sup>109</sup> This astute summation can be extended beyond the pueblo structure to also categorize the appeal of the specific form of settlement created at western art colonies. Inspiration from Native American and Hispanic culture provided colonists with an 'escape from the overwrought and narrowly defined aestheticism of New York City'.<sup>110</sup> The 'new-old' style adopted by Santa Fe ultimately corresponds to the project of the art colony in the southwest. Art-colonists invoked ancient non-Anglo culture in an attempt to remake and improve a sense of homemaking: creating new from the old. The homes colonists built were, in many ways, as much examples of colony-produced art as paintings and novels, with Richard Harris surmising that 'adobe homebuilding came to be viewed as a visual art, similar to sculpture'.<sup>111</sup> These Puebloesque structures became metaphors for the colony itself, revealing much about the appeal of the western art colony.

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<sup>109</sup> Mooney, 'Sunny Spain or Our Algeria', p. 380.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 380.

<sup>111</sup> Harris, *Santa Fe*, p. 22.

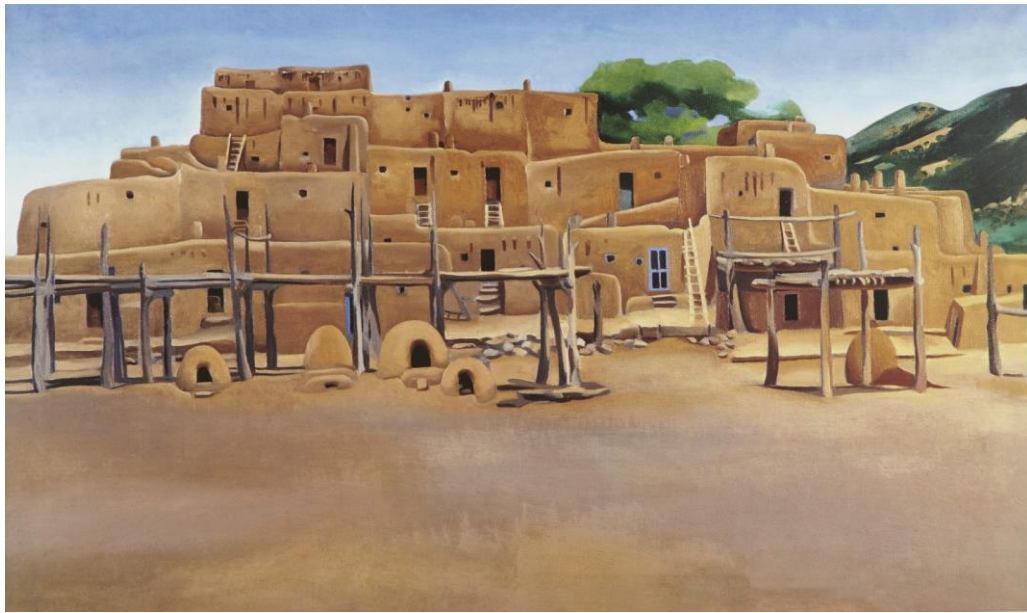
**Figure 1:** Marsden Hartley, *New Mexico Recollection No. 13*, c. 1923, oil on canvas



**Figure 2:** the northern New Mexican landscape viewed from the train to Santa Fe, author's own photograph



**Figure 3:** Georgia O'Keeffe, *Taos Pueblo*, 1929, oil on canvas



## Mary Austin in Santa Fe

In a landscape that she perceived to be at once both timeless and in constant change, Mary Austin saw an opportunity to reconcile her attraction to a sense of home with the patterns of movement she enacted to confront difficulties throughout her life. In her autobiography *Earth Horizon* Austin recalls how the death of her mother left her feeling 'too desperately displaced from the true center of her being not to feel obliged to go somewhere'.<sup>112</sup> This sense of displacement prompted a succession of travels over the course of her life. After the failure of her marital home in Owens Valley, California, Austin was instrumental in establishing the Carmel art colony. She was one of the first to set up home alongside her friend George Sterling, constructing a Native American 'wickiup' structure with the profits from her first major success as a novelist: a paean to Californian landscape and indigenous culture entitled *The Land of Little Rain* (1903). However, a diagnosis of breast cancer in 1907 left her 'stricken' and 'completely shaken out of her place' in Carmel, prompting her to embark on a two year trip to Europe which included time spent in Italy, Switzerland and London before Austin returned to the US and settled in New York.<sup>113</sup>

These successive migrations led Austin to categorize her life as a series of 'shuttlings to and fro' in a continuous bid to 'escape' the 'background of [her] youth'.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, this practice of movement is recounted as figurative as well as physical in *Earth Horizon*, as Austin leads readers through the trails of her life. When her political consciousness is awakened, for instance, Austin turns to the familiar trope of allegorical movement, finding 'the pointers of her own trail going in the direction of women who desired the liberation of women for its own sake'.<sup>115</sup> Austin's vocational motivation stems from a similar impetus as her travels to various places: both illuminate the writer's search for things unconventional and progressive. Austin was, as her biographer astutely terms, a

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<sup>112</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 274.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 131 and p. 279.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

'pathfinder'.<sup>116</sup> Like Lawrence, Austin was in search of something new and more satisfying and moved continually to find it; she followed paths which, she hoped, would lead to something.

Austin was searching for different values and practices (different ways of thinking and different ways of doing things) in both her real-life travels and sociological causes. Her life of trails is thus what Janis Stout defines as a 'home-founding journey': employing forward-looking practices of movement which focus on the endpoint of the journey and the benefits it will bring.<sup>117</sup> Austin exhibits this future-centeredness throughout her life journeys, invoking metaphors of movement in her promotion of feminist lifestyle alternatives and using autonomous movement in a bid to find a new type of community which would satisfy the 'true center of her being'.

The endpoint of these distinct endeavours is, however, the same: Austin was searching for a more fulfilling sense of home. Indeed, alongside Austin's frequent references to paths in her autobiography, 'few intellectuals of her generation had clung more obstinately to the idea of a home, a house, a garden'.<sup>118</sup> Thus, like D. H. Lawrence, Austin was in search of a complicated mode of community, one which could accommodate her seemingly contradictory aspirations for autonomous movement and a sense of belonging. These conflicting desires are encapsulated in Luhan's compliment that Austin was 'one of the best companions in the world in a house or on a trip'.<sup>119</sup> As Stout affirms, Austin's life was a constant search for reconciliation between the freedom to move and the attractions of setting up home:

Austin's imagination was powerfully engaged *both* by the urgency of departure as an expression of the will to personal freedom and the liberation of woman *and* by its complement (or what seem its opposite), the idea of the Beloved House.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Melody Graulich, *Western Trails: A Collection of Short Stories by Mary Austin* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> Janis P. Stout, *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983), p. 42.

<sup>118</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 274.

<sup>119</sup> Janis P. Stout, *Through the Window, Out the Door: Women's Narratives of Departure, from Austin and Cather to Tyler, Morrison, and Didion* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), p. 38.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

As this description suggests, Stout is among a number of critics to place this theme within the wider framework of Austin's feminism, explaining the desire for 'the freedom to move out of and back into the home' as attempts to extend and redefine the limited movements available to women at this time.<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, this is not simply a drive to abandon the domestic sphere but is instead the promotion of limited engagement with the home. As such, this stance has wider implications for Austin's worldview beyond her political aims, particularly in her desire for a satisfying sense of community. Austin's feminist position highlights her search for lifestyle alternatives as she seeks to reconcile her contradictory aspirations in order to extend and redefine the idea of community.

As she outlined in a letter to Mabel Dodge Luhan, Austin's search for a place which could accommodate her desires for freedom and belonging was, for many years, a restless search: 'What I want is a permanent home and a resting place for my affections'.<sup>122</sup> Although Austin visited Luhan on numerous occasions before moving to New Mexico permanently, she was initially sceptical that the southwest could satisfy the 'true center of her being'. In a letter to Luhan written in 1924, preceding her decision to relocate by mere months, Austin asserts:

I suppose after I have been away from New Mexico for a year or two, I shall recall only its picturesque phases [...] but just now I can see it only as a land of bad roads, bad weather, inadequate living facilities, incompetent service and intellectual sterility. I shall leave for New York as soon as possible.<sup>123</sup>

However, like Lawrence and Alice Corbin, Austin's opinion was altered by her experience of living in the art colony. Being part of this network of temporary association afforded Austin the reconciliation of movement and settlement. Austin had found the complicated sense of community which had prompted her years of displacement; she had found the 'resting place for [her] affections'.

That resting place was to be Casa Querida, Spanish for Beloved House, the home Austin began planning and building as soon as she moved to Santa Fe in 1924. Casa Querida represented

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>122</sup> Letter Austin to Luhan, 10 May [n.d.], quoted in Esther Lanigan Stineman, *Mary Austin*, p. 165.

<sup>123</sup> Letter Austin to Luhan, 8 October [1924], quoted in *ibid.*, p. 167.



the culmination of her 'home-founding journey': within the art colony milieu it extended and redefined the idea of home and allowed her to feel a sense of belonging without restricting her autonomy to leave the domestic sphere.<sup>124</sup> She could be a home maker (in the most literal sense) without being constrained by the roles of wife and mother, and could feel settled in one place while still interacting with an ever changing group of visiting artists. As such it represented an improvement on Austin's ideas of the home and a lifestyle alternative for her as both a woman and an artist. Its status as an improvement on where Austin had come from is reinforced by the fact that roses and grapevines from Austin's childhood home were even sent to be planted at Casa Querida.<sup>125</sup> Like Lawrence, Austin was not looking for a complete antithesis but a review of ideas of community as a place to belong. Austin did not reject the 'background of [her] youth' but wanted to 'escape' its negative traits. Santa Fe, to Austin, could incorporate both her past and her long sought after present. The pull of these twin concerns is evident in comparisons between Santa Fe and Austin's childhood home of Carlinville, Illinois, outlined by her biographer T. M. Pearce:

The two towns have their community life around plazas with bandstands shaded by fine old trees. The narrow streets [...] encourage the same type of easy commerce and conversation. [...] The courthouse, of which Carlinvillans are justly proud, is of the same period of columned dignity and community justice as the statehouse in Santa Fe, and so resembles the latter that the two might have been the work of one architect. There is a religious college, too, in Santa Fe, though of different tradition; and lovely natural surroundings, again in different character, but feeding the same nature-loving appetite so insatiable in Mary Austin.<sup>126</sup>

As an alternative model of community, the western art colony can accommodate what an artist brings with them. In this instance, Austin brings aspects of her first home to this improved sense of

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<sup>124</sup> Stout, *The Journey Narrative in American Literature*, p. 42

<sup>125</sup> T. M. Pearce, *The Beloved House* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940), p. 34.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p.39.

community, emphasizing the objective of Austin's forward-looking journeys of achieving a positive end result.

The collection of diverse individuals moving into and out of the colony milieu showed Austin how movement could heighten experiences of and affiliation with the southwest; opinions she expounds, for instance, in her description of driving excursions with Tony Lujan. Austin clearly became attuned to these qualities when her engagements with the art colony community were temporary and sporadic. Despite her denigration of Santa Fe before she moved there, this ethos is identifiable in the motivation behind a grand road trip undertaken to finish the research for *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, Austin's 1923 southwestern opus. Part memoir, part travel narrative and part ecological study, this genre-blending work outlines the rich and diverse history of the American southwest, from its societies and inhabitants to its flora and fauna. The road trip, on which Austin was accompanied by friends Daniel MacDougal, Gerald Cassidy and Ina Sizer Cassidy, was a similarly forward-looking journey focused on a positive end result:

When Mary Hunter Austin left Santa Fe, New Mexico, to begin a 2,500-mile journey 'between the Rio Colorado and the Rio Grande,' she knew what she wanted to find. [...] It was to be for her a journey of return, an opportunity to recover a sense of place in her writing that had slipped away.<sup>127</sup>

Just as Casa Querida could recover the positive qualities of Austin's original Carlinville home, the art colony community also provided Austin with the artistic rejuvenation to recover the success she had garnered two decades earlier with *The Land of Little Rain*. Indeed, faithfully built in the Spanish pueblo style, Austin described Casa Querida as a 'home built for work'.<sup>128</sup> The 'sense of place' in her writing resulted from her sense of place in the art colony community, declaring to Luhan that 'If my heart was at rest I know I could do better work'.<sup>129</sup> This trip, like her other myriad travels, was not

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<sup>127</sup> Larry Evers, 'Mary Austin and the Spirit of the Land', in *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, by Mary Austin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1983), pp. ix-xxv (p. ix). All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>128</sup> Stineman, *Mary Austin*, p. 153.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

nomadic movement, but a journey aimed towards something. Austin was following a path towards her needs as an artist.

Both Lawrence and Austin were in search of a form of community that would aid their personal development and stimulate their aesthetic capabilities. And, like Lawrence's ranch, Casa Querida afforded Austin control over her level of engagement and did not preclude autonomous movement, generating an artistically rejuvenating space in the network of temporary association. Austin outlines the appeal of the western art colony as a place to reinvigorate and push the boundaries of aesthetic creation in a 1929 article for the *Bookman*, stating that artists were initially drawn to the 'new color relations' of the New Mexican landscape but that enduring attraction was the result of artists recognising that the artistically collaborative milieu also aided their development of 'a more robust sense of form, new rhythm in verse, new approaches to the story'.<sup>130</sup> Although Austin refers to colony-produced art, her rhetoric is also useful in understanding patterns of behaviour identifiable at the western art colony. As well as literary narrative, the 'story' implies the living story of this group of diverse individuals congregating in New Mexico, complete with a 'new rhythm' of artists moving into and out of the colony milieu, creating a 'new form' of community. Austin champions the specificity of the southwest as a location capable of accommodating such a community in *The Land of Journeys' Ending*:

For I have written thus far in vain if you do not begin to understand that New Mexico is still a place in which the miraculous may happen. All myth, all miracle, is in the beginning a notice of a Borning in the deep self; new ideas, new concepts of spiritual reality making their way to expression in whatever stuff is current in the mind of the locality.<sup>131</sup>

Here Austin invokes the same rhetoric as Lawrence, focusing on innovative approaches to life and art. The 'miraculous' nature of the southwest even echoes her earlier assertion of the 'magic carpet' ride resulting from Tony Lujan's driving excursions. Like Lawrence's 'bon-bon' wrapped world, the

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<sup>130</sup> Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 194.

<sup>131</sup> Austin, *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, p. 337.

network of temporary association in Santa Fe aided Austin's engagement with the southwestern landscape and her enjoyment of the region's natural pleasures:

Some experiences in life shake the soul free from unessentials, separate the great values, the true substance of living from the trappings. Mary Austin's world of nature did that for her.

What she saw in the mountains, whom she met in the mining camps, the places she traveled in the desert, drew a clear line between the fundamental realities and the surface factors of life.<sup>132</sup>

Yet *The Land of Journeys' Ending* is not concerned with 'travel[s] in the desert'. There is no fictional protagonist embarking on a journey which culminates in a home in New Mexico and it does not document the road trip undertaken by Austin. Instead, the book is concerned with 'the world of nature' which Austin found so stimulating; it is an extensive exploration of the ecological history of the region. As she explained to her travelling companion MacDougal, 'I see now that where I came wholly into the presence of the Land, there was a third thing came into being, the sum of what passed between me and the Land'.<sup>133</sup> There are echoes here of Austin's aspiration to reconcile her desires for movement and a home. The duality of people and nature is almost physicalized in this description as she acknowledges the presence of something real existing at the intersection of two elements at once both discrete and connected. Correlation between Austin's view of local geography, the 'world of nature', and the western art colony's alternative model of community is reinforced by Lesley Poling-Kempes' discussion of Lawrence and fellow art-colonist Georgia O'Keeffe:

The landscape, and the geophysical forces that have created and continue to re-create it, is the story of New Mexico. The topography underfoot offers a continuous journey backward and forward through millions of years of creation and destruction. The region is as dramatic to geologists as it is to artists.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Pearce, *The Beloved House*, p. 146.

<sup>133</sup> Evers, 'Mary Austin and the Spirit of the Land', p. ix.

<sup>134</sup> Lesley Poling-Kempes, 'A Call to Place', in *Georgia O'Keeffe and New Mexico: A Sense of Place*, ed. by Barbara Buhler Lynes, Poling-Kempes and Frederick W. Turner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 77-88 (p. 78).

The 'story' of New Mexico is another implication of Austin's description of opportunities for a 'new story' at the art colony. As a network of temporary association, the art colony community was a story of diverse individuals on a 'continuous journey backward and forward', quite literally in the case of all those art-colonists whose engagements were temporary. Such descriptions exemplify Gary Snyder's assertion in *A Place in Space* of 'the interconnectedness of life and the remarkable ways that energy flows through living systems on the planet'.<sup>135</sup> Although Snyder's remarks refer to ecological 'living systems' they can also be extended to human systems of interconnectedness. In the western art colony – a Nancian realm of being in common – people's encounters were overlapping and connected and reactive, but were not unified or homogenous.<sup>136</sup> The art colony represents a complex model of community formed through the continuous change of participants, both for those enacting diverse movements and those who played host to an ever-changing crowd. Austin's representation of the region thus echoes the interaction of colonists in the alternative community of New Mexican art colonies, emphasizing definition of the western art colony as a distinctive form of settlement.

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<sup>135</sup> Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds* (Washington: Counterpoint, 1995), p. 209.

<sup>136</sup> Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, p. xxxviii.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **Race and cultural interactions in New Mexican art colonies**

This chapter builds on the previous chapter by examining forms of engagement and interaction between art colony participants and regional Native Americans and Hispanos. Practices of immersion and separation that characterize the art colony, exhibited in the interplay between the communal and the autonomous explored in the previous chapter, help us to understand colonists' approach to other cultures while at the same time providing an insight into the similar processes of managed connectedness enacted by Native Americans and Hispanos in their engagement with Anglo art-colonists. While the historical process whereby non-Anglo-Americans claimed their presence in the land was largely unacknowledged by these art-colonists, the practices of movement and limited engagements with place afforded by the art colony created distinctive engagements with other cultures and influenced distinct interpretations of cultural difference. Viewing non-Anglo cultures through the lens of their own desires for a more meaningful way of life, colonists at western art colonies often displayed a tension between their idealistic aspirations and tendencies towards cultural appropriation.

New Mexican art colonies yield more illuminating examples of this particular aspect than their counterparts in Carmel. In this chapter I focus on three texts, produced in Santa Fe and Taos, which directly address and primarily engage with understanding and communicating non-Anglo-American cultures. These works were produced after the zenith of the Carmel art colony, at a time when the 'Indian vogue' had gained substantial momentum and the burgeoning field of anthropology was grappling with how to communicate cultural difference.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, New Mexico was the perfect 'laboratory' for this new field of enquiry since its non-Anglo inhabitants provided a sense

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<sup>1</sup> Erika Marie Bsumek, *Indian-Made: Navajo Culture in the Marketplace, 1868-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008) and S. Elizabeth Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996) both provide insightful explorations of the rise of 'Indianness' in Anglo-American culture, particularly as a model for white America.

of exoticism as well as the safety of a shared sense of Americanness.<sup>2</sup> This makes New Mexican art colonies, and works produced therein, highly illuminating in terms of the interaction between this empirical, scientific approach to cultural difference and colonists' artistic, imaginative responses to other cultures. This specific approach emphasizes how colonists explored ideas of a meaningful way to live by drawing on other cultures. Artists and writers in Carmel exhibit patterns of behaviour which also explore these ideas, and which align them with colonists in Santa Fe and Taos, but, preceding the New Mexican colonies by over a decade, colony-produced art in Carmel yields fewer examples of colonists exploring these ideas through interactions with other cultures. Colonist works from Santa Fe and Taos more overtly project these desires on to their representations of Native and Hispanic American communities. Mary Austin's writings in Carmel are a notable exclusion to this, but these writings I discuss in Chapter Four to draw different conclusions regarding gendered behaviour and sexuality. This engagement with Native American communities, specifically, obviously overlaps with the discussions of this chapter, but are highly illuminating when viewed through Chapter Four's distinct critical framework. What patterns of behaviour in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos all reveal is a constant questioning and experimenting with aspirations for a more meaningful way to live and more satisfying form of community at the western art colony.

As we have seen, practices of movement were central to the alternative mode of community provided by the art colony and the more satisfying way of life colonists felt that it offered. When they were in the southwest, the art colony provided proximity to and opportunities for contact with the region's Native and Spanish-speaking populations, but the act of moving to and from the southwest allowed art-colonists to control the number and type of interactions. The three art-colonists discussed at length in this chapter were all sporadic visitors to New Mexican art colonies and, as a result, they made a selective engagement with indigenous cultures. Anthropologist and novelist Oliver La Farge, photographer Ansel Adams and novelist Willa Cather all shuttled between

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara Babcock and Nancy J. Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880-1980* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 7.

New York and New Mexican art colonies, a practice of movement which produced a distinct interpretation of Native and Hispanic Americans.

Within these parameters, the experiences of art-colonists were formed through physical proximity with local peoples in the southwest. Having removed themselves from the 'civilized' centre to the western colony, art-colonists conducted exploratory investigations through contact with Native and Spanish-speaking cultures. In exploring the possibility of better ways of living, colonists assumed that they could learn from these other cultures and incorporate appealing aspects into the colony's alternative mode of community. Interactions with other cultures could become part of the network of temporary associations and reinforce the diversity fostered by the colony milieu. Harvey Fergusson, for instance, makes the following claim for these contacts:

Never had a deeper sense of the mystery, the bottomless sweetness of new experience – of contact with men, women, earth, animals unmarred by habit – of collision strong enough to crash through all preoccupations, create a moment wholly lived. A sense of the variety of reality. [...] Good days of work, stroll and play, love. The ideal rhythm.<sup>3</sup>

Fergusson's rhetoric attests to the satisfaction found in western art colonies, in these places of 'contact', 'collision' and 'variety'. Engagements with Native American and Hispanic communities were part of the 'ideal rhythm' and 'variety' sought in the western art colony milieu. I examine these art colonies as contact zones comprised of myriad connections and encounters following the terminology employed by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*. Pratt chooses to employ the term 'contact zone' rather than the more traditionally invoked 'colonial frontier' since it shifts the 'center of gravity' and the 'point of view' away from the expansionist perspective.<sup>4</sup> Pratt's focus on interactions occurring within colonized or decolonized locations as opposed to metropolitan responses emphasizes that her terminology also invokes 'the space and time where subjects previously separated by geography and history are co-present, the point at which their trajectories

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<sup>3</sup> Diary, November [1924], Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.



now intersect'.<sup>5</sup> In the atmosphere of these art colonies these were not only conceptual trajectories concerning the social development of different cultures, but also the real-life intersection of colonists' diverse movements: encounters between cultures in the southwest were reinforced by the intersecting trajectories of various Anglo-American art-colonists. Pratt's shifted 'center of gravity' also highlights the extent to which Native American and Hispanic peoples enacted a sense of controlled contact with Anglo visitors too. This aspect of the contact zone between cultures in New Mexico establishes non-Anglo agency in a way unacknowledged by art-colonists. Native American and Hispanic New Mexicans managed their engagement with Anglo colonists, mediating and often ultimately thwarting colonists' desires to delve into these cultures as research for their own meaningful way of life in the colony community. Allowing access to Anglo visitors provided an opportunity to combat assimilation and the subsequent loss of cultural traditions which were being increasingly felt due to, for instance, Native American children's attendance at government run Indian schools. Colonists also brought commercial opportunities and thus economic benefits to these tribes. Native Americans in Santa Fe and Taos had long worked as models for Anglo art-colonists, and colonist Erna Fergusson's *Indian Detours* brought a steady stream of revenue through tourist purchases of arts and crafts. By exploiting colonists' primitivist sensibilities and preservationist ethic, southwestern Native Americans could viably maintain a sense of cultural distinctiveness. There was, however, acute awareness that this came at the expense of exploitation and fetishization of these cultures. As the twentieth century progressed, many tribes came to assert their own grounds of visibility to Anglo America, restricting access to traditional ceremonies and not divulging esoteric knowledge. The Hopi Snake Dance, attended by art-colonists including Mabel Dodge Luhan and D. H. Lawrence, for instance, banned photography at the ceremony before ultimately stopping admission to Anglo visitors.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 193.

Native American and Hispanic New Mexicans became models (positive and negative) for the more meaningful way of life sought by artists in western art colonies. Having been entreated to come to New Mexico by her then husband, Maurice Sterne, to 'Save the Indians, their art – culture – reveal it to the world!', Luhan went on to suggest that southwestern Native Americans held the secret to the more spiritually satisfying way of life that many art-colonists were seeking: 'We [Anglo-Americans] watch things happen in Nature as though they were outside us and separate from us, but the Indians know they are that which they contemplate'.<sup>7</sup> Luhan's suggestion that Anglo-Americans are detached and alienated presents the Native American as the Anglo-American's saviour. She declares that Anglo-Americans need to reconnect – to nature, to each other, to other cultures – reinforcing the attraction of the colony milieu as a site of connectedness. She also, however, uses Native American culture to confront her own feelings of inadequacy and invokes an 'us' and 'them' rhetoric which places Native Americans in the role of the primitive.

However, where Native Americans often became the reflection of whatever art-colonists found lacking in their own culture, they often simultaneously denigrated what they believed were negative aspects of Hispanic culture. Both classified as 'other', Hispanic and Native Americans became Anglo colonists' projections of the different ways of life they sought at these colonies. In this they imagine Native and Spanish-speaking Americans as what Marianna Torgovnick describes as the two versions of the primitive: 'Primitives are our untamed selves, our id forces – libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous. Primitives are mystics, in tune with nature, part of its harmonies'.<sup>8</sup> As I argued in Chapter Two, colonists were in search of something different, something which combined the freedom of frequent and diverse movements with a sense of belonging. Encounters with New Mexico's Native American and Spanish-speaking peoples were employed in this endeavour as useful resources to confront perceived deficiencies in the urban American environment; 'without such a model [...] it becomes increasingly difficult to evaluate or understand [...] contemporary pathology

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<sup>7</sup> Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 79; Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Winter in Taos* (Taos: Las Palomas de Taos, 1982), p. 196. All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>8</sup> Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, p. 8.

and possibilities'.<sup>9</sup> Colonists focused on aspects of Native and Spanish-speaking communities which they felt could inform their own way of life in western art colonies, 'document[ing] the intimate life of primitive peoples' to 'learn the truth' about themselves 'safely, as observers', as Torgovnick argues in *Gone Primitive*.<sup>10</sup> Artistic interpretations of Native culture produced at the art colony were all grounded in visual experiences which made local peoples the 'object of unrelenting viewing'.<sup>11</sup> Be it while on exploratory trips, depicting Hispanic characters in their fiction or photographing Native American villages, colonists' thinking was based on observation. Collecting impressions became a representational strategy exhibited in everything from anthropology to literary accounts, photography to sightseeing.

I want to draw attention to the distinctive colonist approach of blending these impressions in colony-produced art. This mix of approaches reflects the art colony's practice of collection and juxtaposition and suggests that colonists were searching for an adequate means of summarizing these cultures: a purely factual account, for instance, was deemed insufficient, with colonists opting instead to incorporate into their work aspects of empirical data to describe tribal practices, as well as trying to capture the spirit of these cultures in imaginative forms. This approach was fostered by the art colony's atmosphere of improvisation as well as colonists' desire to penetrate further and understand more about these cultures, especially more about Native mysticism.

Building on the previous chapter's exploration of the colonist impulse to establish an alternative form of community in the southwest, I now turn my attention to how attraction to this specific locale prompted colonists' distinct, though ultimately self-serving, impressions of Native and Hispanic Americans. Attempts to understand and summarize cultural difference were sensitive and attentive, but ultimately colonists read Native and Spanish-speaking peoples only through their own desires for something different. Austin's vision of a 'resting place for [her] affections', for instance,

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<sup>9</sup> Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 177.

was deeply influenced by her knowledge of Native American culture.<sup>12</sup> As her biographer Janis Stout contends, 'It was in part her yearning for home that impelled her emotionally charged interest in folk cultures, which she viewed as cultures firmly rooted in a homeplace'.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, inhabiting a region where contact with Native American culture was possible, colonists came to believe that 'Pueblo culture must survive not only in justice to the Indian but also in service to the white man' and, for colonists specifically, in service to the alternative mode of community that they sought in the west.<sup>14</sup> For Austin, Native Americans were 'not too easily accessible to make them common, but just far enough removed to make seeing them one of the few remaining great American adventures'.<sup>15</sup> As well as exalting southwestern cultural diversity, Austin's sentiment could just as easily be applied to the art colony milieu: not too accessible, not too common, an adventure into a place of excitement and curiosity.

Colony-produced artworks are interesting and useful in the ways in which they present Native American and Hispanic cultures and also for what they intrinsically communicate about the art colony as a unique set of meanings and connections. Catherine Lavender eloquently surmises the relationship between Anglo- and Native Americans in southwestern cultural accounts:

In essence, it is as if [they ...] looked through a window at Native American cultures, fully believing that what they saw through the window were the Native American activities on the other side of the glass. In fact what they saw through the glass were Native American activities as well as their own reflections.<sup>16</sup>

This is a useful metaphor for analysing representations of the southwest during this period. In addition to explicating the autobiography embedded in the observation of Native subjects, Lavender also highlights a further feature of colony-produced accounts of Native and Spanish-speaking

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<sup>12</sup> Letter Austin to Luhan, 10 May [n.d.], quoted in Stineman, *Mary Austin*, p. 165.

<sup>13</sup> Stout, *Through the Window*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Philp, *John Collier*, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> Padgett, *Indian Country*, p. 207.

<sup>16</sup> Catherine J. Lavender, *Scientists and Storytellers: Feminist Anthropologists and the Construction of the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), p. 1.

people. Peering out of a window at the 'other' outside, artists' impressions of the cultures they observed were bordered and partial; a snapshot contained within the limited perimeters of the window's frame. These art colonies are thus an informative and unexamined example of an impetus David Spurr also describes: 'In the face of what may appear as a vast cultural and geographical blankness, colonization is a form of self-inscription onto the lives of a people who are conceived of as an extension of the landscape'.<sup>17</sup>

In their explorations of a sense of community which accommodated both movement and diversity, colonists often assert the opposite as the ideal qualities of Native and Spanish-speaking peoples. Colonist endeavours to interpret these cultures often resulted in generalized depictions of Native American and Hispanic communities as separate and vanishing, quite at odds with opportunities for movement and unconventional ways of living that were afforded by the colonists' own network of temporary association or, indeed, the movements that Native groups were actually making. Colonists exerted a preservationist ethic towards Native American culture whilst negatively perceived aspects of Hispanic culture were depicted as subject to inevitable decline. Be it a novel, photograph, or anthropological report, colonists imagined aspects of Native American culture as static rather than acknowledging their fluidity and evolution.<sup>18</sup> As John Brinckerhoff Jackson asserts in *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, 'it is to see our past that thousands of tourists come to New Mexico: archaeologists, geologists, antiquarians, lovers of whatever is out-of-date or mysterious because of age'.<sup>19</sup> The predilection of art-colonists to present Native Americans as a primitive and static race is vividly represented in Cather's *The Professor's House*. When Tom Outland, Cather's Anglo-American explorer in New Mexico, stumbles upon Cliff City, he exclaims:

Far up above me, a thousand feet or so, set in a great cavern in the face of the cliff, I saw a little city of stone, asleep. It was as still as sculpture – and something like that. [...] Such

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<sup>17</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Melissa Banta and Curtis M. Hinsley, *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 15.

silence and stillness and repose – immortal repose. That village sat looking down into the canyon with the calmness of eternity. [...] I knew at once that I had come upon the city of some extinct civilization, hidden away in this inaccessible mesa for centuries, preserved in the dry air and almost perpetual sunlight like a fly in amber.<sup>20</sup>

This introductory description is peppered with a rhetoric which continues throughout Cather's novel, rendering Native American culture ancient and beyond change. Native American culture in the southwest is thus presented as a story without a beginning or ending: suspended in time and space. Yet, like any other culture, these peoples were, of course, influenced by changing social, economic and political contexts and their cultures were constantly adapting, evolving and developing. It was perhaps tempting to depict 'primitive' cultures as static and discrete, yet Native and Spanish-speaking peoples were not 'an archaic survival' and their cultural identity was actually 'an ongoing process, politically contested and historically unfinished'.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, as Molly H. Mullin wryly points out, many of the white, middle-class artists and writers in the southwest were 'more homogenous as a group than the Native artists they promoted'.<sup>22</sup>

Viewing other cultures through the lens of their own desires for difference, reducing them to positive and negative models, producing representations of vanishing Native American and Spanish-speaking populations, and claiming other cultures in service to Anglo-American ideas broadly implicate these colonists in the racialism and racism that characterized Anglo America during this period. Postcolonial discourse has thoroughly critiqued such interactions and has looked at a wide range of art and literature not just as evidence of Western viewpoints but also as heavily implicated in the structures and processes of colonization, aiming to 'decolonize knowledge, history, and human relations'.<sup>23</sup> The exoticism of Native American rituals and practices often held a spectacular

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<sup>20</sup> Cather, *The Professor's House*, pp. 201-02.

<sup>21</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Molly H. Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 3.

interest for art-colonists, exposing Native American New Mexicans to the practices of objectification. Fergusson, for instance, notes in his diary his plan to 'get an Indian guide to take me deer hunting. Good way to get a closer look at one'. Dismissing any ambiguity as to the object of his gaze, he adds, 'matters little whether I get a deer'.<sup>24</sup> Other art-colonists assumed authority to speak on behalf of these other cultures. Austin was one of the colonies' most ardent advocates for Native American rights, but her engagements with New Mexico's indigenous people often renders them mute. Despite her ostensibly positive intentions to celebrate the attraction colonists felt to the southwest, Austin's attempts to read and examine Native and Spanish-speaking populations often conveyed a troubling assumption of power. The voice of authority booms throughout *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, for instance, with Austin often perched on a high horse and condemning assimilationist agendas towards Native Americans:

For this is what we have done with the heritage of our Ancients. We have laid them open to destruction at the hands of those elements in our own society who compensate their failure of spiritual power over our civilization, by imposing its drab insignia on the rich fabric of Amerindian culture, dimming it as the mud of a back-water tide dims the iridescence of sea shell.<sup>25</sup>

Austin's assumed authority was so widely regarded that it spawned a story which became well-known among Native Americans. Her biographer, T. M. Pearce, writes:

A fine Indian in one of the Rio Grande pueblos was being questioned by a tourist who had been reading several of the many books descriptive and interpretive of Southwestern Indians. The visitor had found points of disagreement in them and kept asking the Indian to tell what was the true and what false. The Indian made two or three answers on points to which he could contribute something, and chose to. Finally, annoyed by some question which was either beyond him or embarrassing to him as prying into tribal information, he

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<sup>24</sup> Diary, November [1924], Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

<sup>25</sup> Austin, *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, p. 264.

said to the examiner, with brief irony, 'Why don't you ask Mary Austin? She knows everything about Indians'.<sup>26</sup>

Austin's enthusiasm for accessing and understanding Native American values and practices, like those of other art-colonists, utilized their useful position to inform domestic audiences about the country's cultural diversity. Commenting on his role in the organization of the 'Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts' at Grand Central Art Galleries in New York in 1931, for instance, painter and Santa Fe colonist John Sloan proclaimed to be 'spreading the consciousness of Indian art in America'.<sup>27</sup> A contemporary article in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* even termed the art colony 'Santa Fe's sales force', suggesting that colonists revealed the uniqueness of New Mexico to the world as 'home and traveling salesmen' for the southwest.<sup>28</sup> In this way the art colonies at Santa Fe and Taos exemplify southwestern theorist Sylvia Rodriguez's summation that 'ideology and expressive culture often give positive interpretation to harsh objective conditions, including oppression and exploitation'.<sup>29</sup> Through objectification and appropriation of local peoples Taos and Santa Fe became 'the mechanism by which a harsh environment and inequitable social conditions became symbolically transformed into something mysterious, awesome and transcendent'.<sup>30</sup> Through these endeavours colonists added to the wealth of contemporary iconography which appropriated and mythologized Native cultures.

As we have seen, much of the available discourse on colonist-Native interaction has been seen through a postcolonial lens.<sup>31</sup> I am not disagreeing with this interpretation in this chapter, but I

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<sup>26</sup> Pearce, *The Beloved House*, p. 101.

<sup>27</sup> Sloan and his wife Dolly spent summers in Santa Fe throughout the 1920s. Sloan was an established artist in New York but his southwestern work marked a departure in style and subject. The couple socialized with other colonists and were particularly involved with the Fiesta parade and festivities. Molly H. Mullin, 'The Patronage of Difference: Making Indian Art "Art, Not Ethnology"', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7 (1992), 395-424 (395); John Loughery, *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), p. 251.

<sup>28</sup> 'Santa Fe's Sales Force', *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 18 May 1926, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Sylvia Rodriguez, 'Art, Tourism, and Race Relations in Taos: Toward a Sociology of the Art Colony', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 45 (1989), 77-99 (p. 77).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>31</sup> Padgett, *Indian Country*; Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*; Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*; Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*; Raymond William Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982).



am asserting that the social arrangement of the colony, its combination of separation and immersion, is matched in encounters with Native Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic groups. Focusing on the intricacies of this dialogue between cultures does not exonerate Anglo-American art-colonists' inequitable relationship with Native and Hispanic communities. Leah Dilworth, Audrey Goodman and Martin Padget all explore different aspects of interactions often erased with postcolonial critiques. In their respective studies they shed light on the intricacies of mythologization and appropriation through close analysis of various aspects of a centre-periphery relationship between Anglo America and the indigenous populations of the southwest, including the culture that facilitated these processes, the audience who received impressions of the region, and the result of presence in the southwest on an Anglo imperialist mentality. These works highlight how intercultural engagements in the southwest were problematic but nonetheless diverse. I engage with this body of literature throughout my discussion of artists in this chapter and extend this field by highlighting the specific interpretations of other cultures pursued in the colony milieu.

For art-colonists like La Farge, Adams and Cather, the specific practices of movement which allowed them to limit their engagement with the southwest and the colony milieu produced distinctive interpretations of the region's indigenous cultures. The impressions they gained on their trips to the southwest served colonists' desires for a more meaningful way of life by learning from other ways of life. This education relied on accessing not only the practicalities of these cultures but their values and philosophies too, access they perceived as necessitated by employing investigative practices alongside imaginative work as they engaged in an 'experimentation [...] with new ways of perceiving, representing, and producing structures of affiliation and difference'.<sup>32</sup> La Farge was dedicated in his endeavours to 'protect' Native American culture but this resulted in problematic interpretation and appropriation. Cather's engagement with Hispanic New Mexicans was as much for her own sake as for the sake of these 'others'. Adams displays a similarly self-serving approach

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<sup>32</sup> Brad Evans, *Before Cultures: The Ethnographic Imagination in American Literature, 1865-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 7-8.

which utilizes cultural difference to experiment artistically. All of these representations of New Mexico's indigenous populations demonstrate the mix of approaches fostered by the art colony's improvisational atmosphere, but which also indicate these art-colonists in broader contemporary racist attitudes.

### **Oliver La Farge**

Oliver La Farge exemplifies the distinctive colony approach to representing Native American culture which presents conventional racist views through interdisciplinary literature. His view of ancient, distinctly different yet inevitably vanishing populations adheres to prevalent contemporary assumptions about Native Americans, but the art colony fostered his exploration of ways in which to describe and represent this sense of complete cultural difference. As both an ethnologist and a novelist, La Farge's fiction and short stories incorporate observable aspects of culture and the work of literary imagination.<sup>33</sup> His writing exemplifies a preservationist ethic which appropriated seemingly-endangered Native American culture in order to protect the qualities of the southwest to which colonists were so attracted. Blending aspects of ethnographic data into imaginative work suggests that La Farge saw empirical analysis as insufficient to understand and share ideas of cultural difference.

It is hard to ascertain La Farge's exact movements into and out of the southwest and the colony milieu, but three of his early pieces of fiction seem to draw directly on colony explorations.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> La Farge was involved in both ethnological and ethnographic work. As an ethnologist he engaged in the '*analysis* or study of a human society and culture'. His academic collection and comparison of cultures were informed by and grounded in ethnographic research ('the *description* of peoples, societies, and cultures'). As such, I refer to La Farge's ethnographic research conducted on his southwestern trips and the ethnological reports carried out in his position at Tulane. 'ethnography, n.', in *OED Online* <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/64809?redirectedFrom=ethnography#eid>> [accessed 20 January 2016] (my emphasis); 'ethnology, n.', in *OED Online* <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/64820#eid5298643>> [accessed 20 January 2016] (my emphasis).

<sup>34</sup> Frequent but vague references to La Farge's time at the Santa Fe and Taos colonies permeate biographies. Cline includes him as a key member of the Santa Fe colony with the following explanation: '[La Farge] did not settle permanently in Santa Fe until 1941, after the writers' colonies had reached their peak. He spent so much time in Santa Fe and the Southwest, however, that much of his work reflects the same passion for Native American life that imbued the work of many of the writers of the literary golden era in Santa Fe and Taos'. Cline, *Literary Pilgrims*, p. 61.

La Farge made Santa Fe his permanent home in 1940 after two decades of sporadic trips between New York and New Mexico which incorporated time spent at the Santa Fe and Taos colonies and on anthropological expeditions. All of these trips focused on contact with Native American populations. By observing and often immersing himself in these completely different ways of life, La Farge attempted to understand these cultures and, ultimately, to communicate them to an Anglo-American audience. His frequent but sporadic visits allowed him to collect a wealth of information about Native American cultures but his movement between the city and the southwest meant these impressions were inevitably partial. As his time in New Mexico incorporated experiences of the colony's alternative model of community and engagements with non-Anglo cultures, La Farge was immersed in the colony's unique sense of collection and juxtaposition – aspects which are reflected in his artistic choices.

His early experiences of the southwest, as a Harvard student on archaeological expeditions, sparked both his attraction to the region and to living cultures as opposed to the scholarly examination of ancient relics.<sup>35</sup> Contact with Hopi and Navajo Native Americans in Arizona and New Mexico began to divert his attention away from the distant past and towards the present situations of Native American cultures. At the end of his third expedition La Farge spent time at the Santa Fe art colony and explored the region on horseback with two companions in order to gain an understanding of these cultures which he felt was not available through his anthropological fieldwork. Travelling to Hopi and Navajo reservations, the group witnessed the Snake-Antelope ceremony at Hortevilla (a theatrical ritual culminating in the performers dancing with rattlesnakes in their mouths), and accompanied Alice Corbin and William Penhallow Henderson to the Mountain

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<sup>35</sup> La Farge's first experience of the American southwest's distinctive character came in 1921 as a Harvard anthropology student on an expedition to study Anasazi ruins. Irked not to be examining Stone Age caves in France, La Farge was not immediately impressed with the southwest, proclaiming that 'the damn country was a howling ash-heap'. However, his interest in existing ways of life quite distinct from his own, which were fostered by the western art colony, were reinforced on a return expedition the following year and particularly on a third in 1924 for which La Farge, having now completed his bachelor's degree, was expedition leader. Oliver La Farge, *Raw Material: The Autobiographical Examination of an Artist's Journey into Maturity* (Santa Fe: Sunstone, 2009), p. 149. Google ebook. All subsequent references are to this edition. Robert A. Hecht, *Oliver La Farge and the American Indian: A Biography* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991), p. 36.

Chant held by the Navajos in the Chuska Mountains.<sup>36</sup> In time Navajos and other southwestern Native American tribes would restrict access to such ceremonies, but during this period there was huge demand for admission to such rituals and, to a large extent, Native American tribes permitted their entry.<sup>37</sup> Another companion on this latter excursion, Frances J. Newcomb, recalls that La Farge arrived with Corbin and Henderson from Santa Fe before they all headed out to the ceremony in a car stocked with blankets and flasks of hot coffee.<sup>38</sup> Although the outing provided further insight into this intriguing culture, this was a rare instance of La Farge arriving at a reservation in a car as for most of this 'footloose adventure' he and his companions preferred to be 'three strange white men riding along [on horses] Indian style' in order to align themselves with the ways of life they were investigating.<sup>39</sup> Their mode of travel seemed to them to aid interactions with the Native Americans they encountered; the long trip on horseback seemed to those they visited an 'extraordinary' feat 'for a white man to perform'.<sup>40</sup> Contact with these cultures had provided La Farge with what he felt was a glimpse of these cultures' inner lives, their philosophies and worldviews, things that could not be understood without experiences of immersion in this way of life.<sup>41</sup>

The combination of ethnographic data collection and more imaginative attempts to access the spirit of Native American culture, influenced by La Farge's experiences in the colony and his southwestern travels, fuelled his explorations into the most appropriate and successful way to communicate cultural difference. As an ethnologist he had faith in anthropology's approach to culture as a process of 'searching out and analyzing symbolic forms – words, images, institutions,

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<sup>36</sup> Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed discussion of Anglo-American attendance and consumption of such ceremonies, see Padget's discussion of the Hopi Snake Dance in *Indian Country*, pp. 174-93.

<sup>38</sup> Frances Newcomb was a trader's wife who went on to forge her own career as a Navajo scholar. T. M. Pearce, *Oliver La Farge* (New York: Twayne, 1972), p. 43. This information was gleaned by Pearce in an interview with Newcomb; unfortunately it is not discussed by Corbin or La Farge.

<sup>39</sup> D'Arcy McNickle, *Indian Man*, p. 33.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> For discussions of the problematic nature of participant-observation see Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Clifford Geertz, 'From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 28 (1974), 26-45; David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

behaviors' which dismantle culture into 'a set of readily observable symbolic forms'.<sup>42</sup> Yet literary interpretations, he felt, could more accurately capture the more intangible elements of these cultures than could ethnological reports. In the words of his biographer T. M. Pearce, 'he was an intellectual trained to date an artefact from a pottery mound, who yearned to play the guitar and to sing folk ballads'.<sup>43</sup> He became a prolific writer, producing a comprehensive body of fiction which often took Native Americans as its subject matter and which tried to combine the ethnographer's knowledge with the writer's poeticism.<sup>44</sup> His novels and short stories combine aspects of ethnographic investigations with the desire to represent a truth imaginatively perceived, declaring the inseparability of empirical facts from personal impressions:

The writer believes that ethnology is an inexact science, inseparable from subjective, qualitative observations. The opinions and bias of the observer, therefore, are essential data which should be frankly presented. The colorless objectivity affected by many ethnologists is a deception and a suppression of data.<sup>45</sup>

La Farge's remarks clarify his approach to both his ethnological and fiction writing and to their combination in his imaginative work, a mix of approaches characteristic of western art colonies: partial, subjective accounts which attempt to penetrate and understand other cultures. In a note of peer criticism, for instance, Mary Austin offers advice to fellow colonist Elizabeth Willis de Huff on the representation of Native Americans in her fiction. Austin notes that 'interest in this sort of thing is rapidly growing' and goes on to urge de Huff to 'acquire the habit of keeping exact and copious notes of gesture, of any distinctively Indian ways of doing things'.<sup>46</sup> Austin's recommendation to

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<sup>42</sup> Geertz, p. 30, p. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*, preface.

<sup>44</sup> After graduating from Harvard, La Farge was appointed assistant in ethnology at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1926, during which time he also began to dabble in more literary interpretations of Navajo and Apache cultures. Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Oliver La Farge, 'Introduction', in *Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. v-xvii (pp. v-vi).

<sup>46</sup> Letter Austin to de Huff, 22 October 1922, Albuquerque, CSWR, Elizabeth Willis de Huff Papers, Box 11, Folder 13. De Huff moved to Santa Fe in 1916 with her husband, John David de Huff, the superintendent of the Santa Fe Indian School. She grew increasingly interested in the area's indigenous populations and went on to find success with children's stories including *Taytay's Tales* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1922), *Swift Eagle of the Rio Grande* (New York: Rand McNally, 1928) and *Hoppity Bunny's Hop* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1939). She also

catalogue cultural practices mirrors the exploratory investigations conducted by La Farge and many other colonists who grounded their artistic interpretations in a sense of empirical knowledge and combined their impressions of Native American practices and the spirit of the culture in order to adequately record cultural difference.

In 'Hard Winter', a short story influenced by his time in New Mexico and published in 1933, La Farge demarcates the intricate physical differences between Anglo- and Native American ways of life.<sup>47</sup> His narrative follows an Apache named Tall Walker as he travels to Native American celebrations and learns about the white tourists who come to watch them. La Farge paints vivid pictures through his intricate knowledge of tribal attire and deportment, as illustrated by the following description of a Native American woman:

Her heavy, black hair hung in two braids intertwined with ribbon; above the meeting of the braids was a red celluloid comb. A circular design was painted on each cheek, and three red lines drawn on her chin. Across her shoulders she wore the yoke of gold-coloured buckskin with wide, curving bands of beadwork and the long fringe hanging down each arm to her wrists. Her dress, under the yoke, was made of blue cotton; about her waist, covering her saddle and skirts, were draped gay blankets of strong design, beneath which her feet showed gaily beaded moccasins.<sup>48</sup>

The level and intricacy of information here, cataloguing cultural differences in elaborate detail, accords with Austin's advice to de Huff while also establishing what David Spurr describes as 'authority through the demarcation of identity and difference'.<sup>49</sup>

La Farge's mix of approaches was experimental at the time. In James Clifford's and George E. Marcus' collection of essays *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* the discipline's

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became a tour guide after Erna Fergusson's Koshare Tours were acquired by the Fred Harvey Company. Weigle and Fiore, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> The short story appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in December 1933.

<sup>48</sup> Oliver La Farge, 'Hard Winter', in *Yellow Sun, Bright Sky*, ed. by Caffrey, pp. 23-43 (p. 23). All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>49</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 7.

former claims of representational transparency are replaced by an appreciation of the impact of the ideological standpoints and rhetorical strategies typically associated with art and literature.<sup>50</sup> At the time, however, this was a more unusual admission: La Farge was employing an interdisciplinary approach to other cultures in his work at a time when 'literary temperament' and 'anthropological training' were perceived as dualistic approaches to the study of other cultures.<sup>51</sup> His twin interests subsequently invoked the ire of a museum curator in a 1930 article in the *Bookman*:

I don't give a damn for literature. I am interested in science, and in Oliver La Farge as a scientist. He is a first-rate anthropologist. We need him. We can't do without him. He's the only man who can talk to the Indians and get anything out of them.<sup>52</sup>

The frustration elicited in not being able to 'get anything out of them' exemplifies, of course, the Anglo-American desire to glean information about these seemingly mysterious cultures, though this was a desire which also motivated colonist accounts that blended investigative and imaginative interpretations. Attempts to understand and penetrate Native American culture were not colony specific but, as this quote suggests, the choice of writers like La Farge to adequately convey a sense of cultural difference through a blend of approaches was distinctive, and reflected the freedom to improvise and the influence of conversing with diverse artists that the art colony provided.

Colonist explorations into the most effective and appropriate way to understand and represent Native Americans were borne of the common Anglo-American presumption of responsibility to protect 'fragile' cultures. Art-colonists felt themselves to be ideally placed to take on this role, feeling that they had gained unique knowledge through their proximity and contact with Native American culture. Much of La Farge's career was devoted to the 'plight' of Native American culture, working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, helping to organize the 'Exposition of Indian Tribal

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<sup>50</sup> James Clifford, 'Partial Truths', in *Writing Culture*, pp. 1-23. See also Evans, *Before Cultures*; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004); Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*.

<sup>51</sup> Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 65.

<sup>52</sup> John Bird, 'The Future of Oliver La Farge', *The Bookman*, 72 (1930), 11-14 (p. 11).

Arts' and presiding over the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs.<sup>53</sup> As ethnologist, novelist and activist La Farge devoted himself to the 'ethical, social and artistic values of minority culture' in their struggle against 'the invasion of mass social patterns'.<sup>54</sup> His invitation to join the board of the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs in February 1930, and subsequent promotion to president two years later, marked a further layer of engagement between La Farge and Native Americans. La Farge's distinguished career has been the focus of a number of biographies and his tireless commitment to Native American rights is often commended, yet his fiction has failed to attract any critical attention.<sup>55</sup> La Farge's desire to help the 'plight' of the Native American is clear from fiction he produced before his focus shifted to questions of reform, and it reflects the network of connections between art-colonists and indigenous populations in New Mexico. Be it with pens or cameras, art-colonists could imagine themselves assuming 'a heroic role, rescuing from obscurity and decay the crumbling relics of an ancient race and presenting to the world the newly discovered evidence of America's own ancient past'.<sup>56</sup> La Farge's presidency at the Eastern Association of Indian Affairs is indicative in this respect as the committee's title encapsulates the art-colonist's relationship with the southwest during this period. La Farge enacted frequent movement between the city and the southwest, which was characteristic of the network of temporary association, yet his perspective on Native American culture was unremittingly that of an Easterner. Believing that he had gained unique insight into Native American culture through the proximity and contact afforded by the art colony, La Farge's endeavours reinforced government initiatives like the 1906 Antiquities Act

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<sup>53</sup> Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 111; Oliver La Farge and John Sloan, *Introduction to American Indian Art: To Accompany the First Exhibition of American Indian Art Selected Entirely with Consideration of Esthetic Value* (New York: The Exposition of Tribal Arts, 1931).

<sup>54</sup> Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*, preface.

<sup>55</sup> Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*; McNickle, *Indian Man*; Everett Gillis, *Oliver La Farge* (Austin: Steck-Vaughn, 1967); Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*; David L. Caffrey, 'Introduction', in *Yellow Sun, Bright Sky: The Indian Country Stories of Oliver La Farge*, ed. by Caffrey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), pp. 1-9.

<sup>56</sup> Martha A. Sandweiss, 'Images of a Sacred Geography', in *The New World's Old World: Photographic Views of Ancient America*, ed. by May Castleberry (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), pp. 62-85 (p. 67).



which suggested that 'professional archaeologists – not native peoples themselves – were the best stewards of America's ancient past'.<sup>57</sup>

Martha Sandweiss has argued that Native Americans were presented as 'subjects of history rather than participants in it'.<sup>58</sup> This is particularly obvious in La Farge's earliest published short story and first foray into imaginatively communicating the cultural diversity he experienced in the southwest. In 'North is Black', published in the *Dial* in 1927, a Navajo man falls for a white woman who entices him to travel north to join her at her brother's ranch. There he finds a white man, a rival suitor, and after a vicious fight ultimately returns to the reservation disillusioned. This tale of failed cultural interaction is, however, relayed in the first person with La Farge assuming the role of a Navajo narrator:

Why do you suppose they call me North Wanderer? I went there, I came back with many horses. Ask my people about the horses Nahokonss Naga brought with him. Yes, that is why I went, to steal horses. I stood on a high place, praying, and my prayers fell away from me, down into the valleys. My prayers got lost, they would not fly up to the Four Quarters.<sup>59</sup>

On his exploratory southwestern trip La Farge had sought to participate in Native American practices, abiding by customs and even speaking local languages where possible, in order to adequately understand what he observed. Through these techniques he began to feel a kinship with the Native American tribes who welcomed him in. In this instance, members of southwestern tribes appear to have felt comfortable allowing La Farge admittance to observe and participate in their communities. His biographer D'Arcy McNickle reports that Nelson Oyaping of the Tewa Indians of Hano Village 'adopted' him to some extent and introduced La Farge and his travelling companions as 'my friends'.<sup>60</sup> This provided La Farge with the impression that he really *knew* Navajo life, not just witnessing ceremonies and calendar rites but also gaining access to more intangible elements like

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<sup>57</sup> Sandweiss, 'Images of a Sacred Geography', p. 80.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>59</sup> Oliver La Farge, 'North is Black', in *Yellow Sun, Bright Sky*, ed. by Caffrey, pp. 11-22 (p. 11).

<sup>60</sup> McNickle, *Indian Man*, p. 35.

values and worldview. This perception of the interactions taking place on this trip are interesting considering this was a period when numerous experiences of broken promises and fiercely-guarded rituals being revealed to Anglo-American audiences understandably resulted in Native American ambivalence towards such experiences.<sup>61</sup> Essentially, the writer's biased interpretation of his experiences is paramount. Furthermore, La Farge's extension of this sense of affiliation and understanding in his fictionalization of these travels is clearly extremely problematic, given that La Farge's engagement with Native American culture went beyond observation into the realm of control. Denying his Native American subjects a voice constitutes cultural intervention, domination and silencing, rather than cultural understanding.

La Farge adamantly opposed the assimilation and Americanization of Native Americans, emphasizing New Mexico's unique regional character in fiction writing influenced by his experiences of the colony and proclaiming that Native Americans are 'something different, exciting, fine, that [make you ...] a little more of a man, or a woman, than you ever were before'.<sup>62</sup> His sense that Native American 'culture must die away under hostile pressure and there was no sign of anything to replace it save hopelessness and sloth' is evident in these representations of Native American society gradually deteriorating through the acquisition of Anglo-American culture.<sup>63</sup> In short stories like 'Hard Winter' and 'North is Black' La Farge presents many of his ethnographic findings about Pueblo culture together with laments about their possible disappearance. Written in the space of a few years, these stories highlight La Farge's passionate concerns during this era through an emphasis on 'othering' Native American culture and its necessary separation from Anglo-American influence.

This approach is encapsulated in La Farge's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Laughing Boy* which was published in 1929, the same year that La Farge completed his master's thesis on 'Deviation in Apache and Navajo Culture'.<sup>64</sup> This was more than coincidence, as much of the ethnographic work La

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<sup>61</sup> Padget, *Indian Country*, p. 180; Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> La Farge writing about *Laughing Boy* for a book club, quoted in McNickle, *Indian Man*, p. 51.

<sup>63</sup> La Farge, *Raw Material*, p. 176.

<sup>64</sup> 'North is Black' was to some extent a precursor to *Laughing Boy*. Reading the short story in the *Dial* prompted Houghton Mifflin editor Ferris Greenslet to contact La Farge to ask if he was planning to write a

Farge had conducted in the southwest was incorporated into the novel.<sup>65</sup> Despite a shift in focus to Central American cultures, interest in the American southwest sparked on his Harvard expeditions continued to be nurtured. As an assistant in ethnology at Tulane University, La Farge started to study the myths and ceremonies of the Navajos and Apaches and continued to learn more of the language.<sup>66</sup> His conscious amalgamation of ethnographic and literary impressions in the novel emphasizes his feeling of connectedness to Native American culture as well as his staunch belief in the value of this way of life.

*Laughing Boy* concerns a young Navajo man, the eponymous Laughing Boy, and his relationship with a Native American woman, Slim Girl, who has been acculturated through Anglo-American schooling. Proclaiming that she will renounce her anglicized ways the pair are married and, for a while, live a peaceful life where he makes turquoise jewellery and she weaves. This serenity is shattered, however, when Laughing Boy catches his wife in bed with a white rancher and she confesses to a past of prostitution and recent adultery. Despite gaining Laughing Boy's forgiveness by explaining her actions as a reaction to her Americanized upbringing, Slim Girl fails to be redeemed as she is shot by a scorned Navajo lover and dies in her husband's arms.

In the character of Laughing Boy, La Farge presented readers with a 'pure' Navajo boy untainted by contact with the Anglo world which exists beyond his tribal borders. Indeed, his naiveté is emphasized to almost caricatured proportions:

'His brother is in jail for stealing cattle, they say.'

'What is jail?' asked Laughing Boy.

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longer treatment on the Navajos. La Farge informed him that he had been working on a novel for some time but with much delay and little confidence. The support of the publishing house gave La Farge a much needed confidence boost to complete the work. Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 44.

<sup>65</sup> La Farge had begun writing the book many years earlier, when he had spent his days immersed in Mayan linguistics and his nights writing *Laughing Boy*. Oliver La Farge, 'Introductory Note to the Original Edition', in *Laughing Boy* (London: Pan, 1973), unnumbered p. iii (all subsequent references are to this edition); Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> Hecht, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 43.

Slender Hair explained: 'It is something the American Chief does to you. He puts you in a room of stone, like a Moqui House, only it is dark and you can't get out. [...]

Laughing Boy thought, I should rather die. He wanted to ask more, but was ashamed to show his ignorance.<sup>67</sup>

Alongside this embodiment of primitive purity is Slim Girl: a Navajo woman tainted by her interaction with the 'white world' which has driven her to accept the traits of greed, manipulation and promiscuity as normal. Leaving aside the troubling gender politics of attitudes to the 'fallen woman', La Farge's construction of this doomed romance resonates with a more overarching agenda. Slim Girl's corruption is due to her attendance at an American school, a view that reflects that of the Navajos La Farge encountered at Lukachukai on his 1924 sojourn whom he categorized as 'rich and untrustworthy, owing to too much schooling'.<sup>68</sup> The sentimentalized depiction of their fictional journey together culminates in Slim Girl's deathbed renunciation of her anglicized ways, highlighting that tribal people are presumed to be either primitive and antiquated or contaminated by progress.

La Farge's warning here is resolutely anti-assimilationist. Indeed, in his foreword to the 1963 edition of *Laughing Boy*, he asserted that he had 'cast back in time to a less corrupt, purer era' of around 1915 in order to emphasize subsequent corruption. Native American culture protecting its purity and remaining unsullied subsequently relies on a marked remove from other cultures and their influence. This ideal state is elegantly represented in 'Hard Winter', which opens with an evocative image of dwellings:

He saw the tents and tall, white lodges, wagons, the smoke of hundreds of fires, the patched-together shelters of brush and cloth that the Navajos put up, the medicine-men's enclosure of green branches, a white tourist's elaborate motor tent.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> La Farge, *Laughing Boy*, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Letter La Farge to his mother during 1924 Harvard research trip, quoted in McNickle, *Indian Man*, p. 50.

<sup>69</sup> La Farge, 'Hard Winter', p. 26.

La Farge acknowledges that different groups of people coexist here: they interact with each other and even cooperate, yet they maintain the perimeters of distinctiveness. But here the antique purity of Apache culture must be kept safely separate, while the Anglo-American visitors are marked as different through their separateness. With everyone enclosed within their appropriate zone, cultures remain discrete. In this La Farge gives imaginative expression to the sense of diversity and variety enjoyed between colonists in the art colony and between colonists and non-colonists: engagements with different types of people that they could ultimately control. This image of Native Americans safely enclosed in southwestern dwellings is not unique to La Farge. It is echoed in an article by Witter Bynner in which he exalts the southwest's indigenous inhabitants for resisting America's prevailing homogeneity:

And round about the landscape, in snug, earthen pueblos, were Indians, guarding the dignity of their race and instinctively living the beauty of their religion and their art, as they had been doing for hundreds of years.<sup>70</sup>

Strict separation is the only means of resistance against acculturation's gradual eradication of cultural difference. As Pearce asserts of La Farge, 'the opinions and the bias of the ethnologist become part of the data found in his report'.<sup>71</sup> As such, La Farge's objections to assimilation become the promotion of segregation. His preservationist ethic reflects the common colony opinion that other cultures hold the key to improving their own way of life, particularly the alternative form of community enjoyed at the art colony. In this way La Farge's fiction illuminates the major project of the art colony.

The protagonists of *Laughing Boy*, 'Hard Winter' and 'North is Black' are all chastised for adopting Anglo-American characteristics. Drawn into this world of white 'Indian worshippers', the narrator of 'Hard Winter' is severely punished for his betrayal of his native, tribal culture. The temptation to become a kept man to an Anglo-American primitivist ultimately leads to the loss of his

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<sup>70</sup> Witter Bynner, 'Santa Fe: A City of Change', in *Laughing Horse*, September 1924, in *The Works of Witter Bynner: Prose Pieces*, ed. by James Kraft (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), p. 45-49 (p. 46).

<sup>71</sup> Pearce, *Oliver La Farge*, p. 107.

flock and his infant son to a catastrophic storm. But La Farge carefully employs his ethnographic knowledge to present these events as more than melodramatic literary punishment. The narrator becomes caught in the storm because his bewitchment by Anglo excesses leads him to neglect his tribal ways of life, leaving the move to winter pastures much later than Apache calendar rites dictate. It is his dismissal of this traditional practice which ultimately seals his fate. Had he stayed away from the Anglo visitors his tribal customs would have remained unsullied, and his infant son would likely have survived to ensure the continuation of the Apache race. The child's death is the omen of La Farge's moralistic tale; a motif matching Slim Girl's demise before producing 'all Navajo' progeny.<sup>72</sup> The writer is heavy-handed in his admonition of cultural interaction, often taking his cautionary morals to the extreme. Here it is Slim Girl's Anglo-American education at an American school which has left her detached from her cultural heritage, a situation she chooses to resolve by marrying a Navajo man and thus produce children which are 'Navajo, all Navajo', while in both of the short stories Native American men are corrupted by Anglo-Americans in the southwest who take a keen interest in 'Indian' culture.<sup>73</sup> Yet, interestingly, through such negative representations of these 'Indian worshippers' La Farge doggedly dissociates himself from this primitivist role. 'Hard Winter', for instance, contains a disparaging and thinly-veiled representation of Tony Lujan's relationship with the Taos salon hostess. La Farge incorporates his intricate knowledge of Native American dress and deportment to admonish the ostentation of the Taos man who has been corrupted by his association with the primitivist white woman:

Juan [the Taos Native American] threw back the fine, white blanket he had wrapped about himself, Taos fashion. [... He] wore a shirt of green silk, cut in the Indian manner, a silk scarf at his throat, a coral necklace and several rings. The shirt, like his blue-flannel leggings, was new and clean. At his waist he had a belt studded with brass and varicoloured glass knobs. [...] His host [the Apache] was in stark contrast. For finery he had only a beaded waistcoat

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<sup>72</sup> *Laughing Boy*, p. 37.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[...] and a couple of feathers stuck into the band of his huge, floppy old black felt hat. [...] The Taos Indian's hair was neat and shiny, the braids in perfect order, while the Apache's had a shaggy look.<sup>74</sup>

Inclusion of these two descriptions invites comparison, allowing La Farge to highlight the westernized Taos man and the loss of his cultural distinctiveness. The Taos man's muddled outfit, incorporating both Native American and western attire, is reinforced with a similar depiction of his Anglo-American 'companion':

He was struck first by the fact that she was wearing moccasins and the particoloured red-and-blue blanket which the Kiowas and some Taos affect. This was incongruous. [...] She was older than he or Juan, and yet immature. [...] Plainly, she thought that Indians were very important, and she was enjoying herself playing Indian.<sup>75</sup>

It is interesting that La Farge distinguishes himself from those Anglo-Americans in Taos to whom 'any man with his hair in braids was treated as something special'.<sup>76</sup> Assuming Native American narrative voice and distancing himself from this type of southwestern visitor suggests a feeling of authority in the writer. He even places himself on the Native American side of what Carol Traynor Williams terms the 'cultural insider-outsider game' by including an episode in *Laughing Boy* where two Navajo boys fool a keen Anglo visitor:

'Ask him to let me see those belts', he told the guide, and then, in baby-talk American's Navajo, 'Your belt – two – good'.

Laughing Boy sat down beside him. '*Nashto, shadani* – give me a smoke, brother-in-law'.

It is rude to call a man brother-in-law, and like most Navajos, he enjoyed using the term, and teaching it, to innocent foreigners. Americans were good fun. [...]

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<sup>74</sup> La Farge, 'Hard Winter', p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

The tourist was fingering Laughing Boy's belts, pulling them around. The Indian thought of pulling in turn at his necktie, but decided it would be poor business.<sup>77</sup>

La Farge clearly presents himself as in on the joke here, with no awareness that he may have been the victim of similar incidents during his interactions with Navajo and Hopi tribes. In this La Farge categorically fails to spot the active participation of Native Americans and the extent to which the objects of his observation could control what is divulged, stage-manage interactions, and ultimately reverse the gaze.

La Farge seems to feel that he has found the ideal method for collecting and communicating impressions of cultural difference: his blending of art and ethnography constituted, to him, the right balance of observation and imagination. However, his stance is undermined by his assumption of Native American narrative voice and promotion of cultural segregation, both of which display a similarly primitivistic bent. As well as enacting a troubling colonization of knowledge, this appropriation of subjectivity also negates the author's anti-assimilationist sentiments as he, in essence, consciously adopts Native American characteristics. La Farge's mentality is curiously hypocritical. By emphasizing the distinctiveness of Native American culture his stories serve to entrench 'Indian' separateness, carrying strong warnings about cultural contamination, yet the author himself is quick to undertake a reverse assimilation. While his Native American characters are tainted by assuming aspects of Anglo-American culture, La Farge readily adopts a Native American subjectivity.

### **Willa Cather**

Willa Cather's treatment of Spanish-speaking people in her hugely successful novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* demonstrates art-colonists' denigration of Spanish-speaking people and their understanding of Hispanic culture as a negative model for the meaningful way of life they sought in the southwest. Her attempt to ground the novel in historical accuracy illustrates the colonist impulse

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<sup>77</sup> Traynor-Williams, *Travel Culture*, p. xviii; La Farge, *Laughing Boy*, p. 14.



to combine research with imagination but ultimately merely proved to replicate entrenched xenophobia and assert the inevitable natural decline of 'inferior' cultures.

Colonist engagement with local peoples in the southwest extended to both Native American and Hispanic culture, but the latter was to a far lesser degree. Mary Austin, for example, supported the formation of a committee dedicated to the preservation and restoration of New Mexican missions and included Hispanic stories alongside Native and Euro-American tales in her 1934 collection *One-Smoke Stories*.<sup>78</sup> Although such instances are overshadowed by Austin's focus on New Mexico's Native American population, they do, at least, present a more positive attitude towards Spanish-speaking people than the views adopted by some of her colony peers. Celebration of Native American culture generally resulted in Spanish-speaking people being simply ignored in favour of adulation of Native Americans but, at times, that celebration also sparked unconcealed scorn for Hispanic culture. Soon after settling in Santa Fe, for instance, Lynn Riggs mused that 'the pueblo life must be wonderful – the real communal life. And to think of how they are being contaminated by the damned whites and the stinking Mexicans! (You see, I already speak the lingo of the pueblo enthusiasts)'.<sup>79</sup> As well as reiterating Oliver La Farge's concerns about assimilation to Anglo-American culture, Riggs directs the blame for Native American problems squarely onto Spanish-speaking people and elucidating how Hispanic New Mexicans thus fall victim to John Bodine's theory of the tri-ethnic trap in Taos: as 'the Anglos glorified Taos Indian culture' so they simultaneously 'relegated the Spanish American to the bottom of the prestige structure'.<sup>80</sup> This stance inevitably affected Hispanic responses to Anglo colonists in New Mexico, and their agency in terms of the southwest's contact zone between cultures. Unlike Native Americans in the region, there were no opportunities for Hispanic New Mexicans to assert the cultural distinctiveness of their way of life and

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<sup>78</sup> Originally the Society for the Revival of Spanish Arts and later the Society for the Restoration and Preservation of Spanish Mission Churches of New Mexico. Donna Pedace, *The Traditional Spanish Market of Santa Fe: History and Artists of 2010* (Santa Fe: Sunstone, 2011), p. 15; Mary Austin, *One-Smoke Stories* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934).

<sup>79</sup> Braunlich, *Haunted by Home*, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> John J. Bodine, 'A Tri-Ethnic Trap: The Spanish Americans in Taos', in *Spanish-Speaking People in the United States*, ed. By June Helm (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 145-53 (p. 147).

thus more readily felt the need to modernize. Sylvia Rodriguez even notes that Hispano land claims were overturned by the US government, who returned the land to Native Americans or declared it conservation areas under their own jurisdiction. These examples of real and ideological denigration of Hispanic culture led many Hispanic Americans to search for viable economic alternatives in urban areas, either by relocating or adopting the patterns of migratory labour: actions which inadvertently reinforced Anglo narratives of cultural disappearance and decline.<sup>81</sup>

Despite differences in attention and appreciation, Hispanics remain as mute as Native Americans in colony-produced art. Neither is given their own voice or opportunities for self-representation. While this tends to result in an exoticized depiction of Native American culture, Hispanic culture is portrayed far more negatively. Where the Native American was venerated as the saviour of harried Anglo Americans, the Hispanic became an adversary. The network of temporary association among colonists championed new, different and ultimately better ways of doing things, an impetus which required cautionary tales as well as exemplary models. Mexico met the requirements as it had long been perceived by Anglo-Americans to be 'the horrible example of what a society could sink to'.<sup>82</sup>

Following the 'counter hegemonic' impetus of Chicano historians, I want to analyse negative representations in colony-produced art in order to question the function of Anglo-American denigrations of Hispanic Americans in a discussion of Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.<sup>83</sup> This 1927 novel fictionalizes the historical venture of two French Catholic priests in the newly-incorporated southwestern territories, depicting their attempts to cultivate a sense of order amongst a succession of wayward Hispanic priests. Although not a Catholic herself, Cather's focus on religious history allowed her to explore a familiar art colony theme: that the network of temporary

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<sup>81</sup> Sylvia Rodriguez has explored this at length in a number of works: 'Land, Water, and Ethnic Identity in Taos', in *Land, Water, and Culture: New Perspectives on Hispanic Land Grants*, ed. by Charles L. Briggs and John R. Van Ness (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp. 313-403; 'Art, Tourism, and Race Relations in Taos'; 'Ethnic Reconstruction in Contemporary Taos', *Journal of the Southwest*, 32 (1990), 541-55.

<sup>82</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life*, p. 38.

<sup>83</sup> Manuel G. Gonzalez, 'Introduction', in *En Aquel Entonces: Readings in Mexican-American History*, ed. by Gonzalez and Cynthia M. Gonzalez (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. xi-xvii (p. xii).

association created the right level of order in the wild New Mexican landscape. Entrenched in Old World orderliness, the missionaries' French Catholicism mediates the unrestrained character of Hispanic Catholicism in the untamed New World borderlands. As Leona Sevick asserts, the Catholic Church provided Cather with a 'solid anchor' in a fractured world, just as many of her peers found in the art colony milieu.<sup>84</sup> Her fictionalized priests manage and limit their engagements with a variety of people, moving around the southwest like Cather did between New York and New Mexico, reflecting how connections between colonists were extended to other cultures but with a similar sense of individual control.

Interest in the region was sparked on Cather's first trip to the southwest in 1912 but the idea for what is arguably her most famous novel was formed during a 1925 visit with Edith Lewis.<sup>85</sup> Two weeks into their southwestern sojourn, Cather and Lewis arrived at Lamy, New Mexico, named after the first Bishop (and later Archbishop) of Santa Fe fictionalized as Father Latour in Cather's novel. Cather and Lewis went on to visit Ácoma and Laguna Pueblo and took horseback rides to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.<sup>86</sup> They also spent time with Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos, with D. H. and Frieda Lawrence at the Kiowa Ranch and at Santa Fe's La Fonda hotel.<sup>87</sup> One summer night in Santa Fe, Cather came across an obscure biography written by a Denver priest, Father William Howlett, chronicling the experiences of the priest's mentor, Father Joseph Machebeuf, who had been a missionary and companion to Bishop Lamy in mid-nineteenth-century New Mexico.<sup>88</sup>

In many ways *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is as much a fictionalized memoir of Cather's sojourns in New Mexico as it is of Archbishop Lamy's. James Woodress asserts that Cather 'always

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<sup>84</sup> Leona Sevick, 'Catholic Expansionism and the Politics of Depression in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Willa Cather*, ed. by Marilee Lindemann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 191-204 (p. 191).

<sup>85</sup> Janis P. Stout, *Willa Cather: The Writer and Her World* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 231.

<sup>86</sup> The trip is outlined extensively by Cather's travel companion Edith Lewis in *Willa Cather Living*, particularly in 'The Professor's House and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', pp. 134-50.

<sup>87</sup> Lewis, *Willa Cather Living*, p. 141.

<sup>88</sup> W. J. Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf* (Pueblo, CO: The Franklin Press Company, 1908), pp. 60-62. Internet Archive ebook.

denied that she went west to gather material for stories, but she did admit that she derived inspiration from her travels'.<sup>89</sup> Continuing work on the novel in New Hampshire and New York over the winter of 1925 Cather returned to the southwest in May 1926 in order to complete the novel, visiting Zuni Pueblo and the sacred Navajo site of Canyon de Chelly in Arizona before retiring to the La Fonda in Santa Fe. While compiling the material to complete her novel Cather made frequent visits to Austin's home, with Austin later claiming that the writing was done at Casa Querida.<sup>90</sup> This trip enabled Cather to 'see some new places' first-hand and 'check some details' of the novel's historical aspects.<sup>91</sup> Unlike the diligent efforts at observational research conducted by La Farge, Cather described these times in the southwest to Luhan as merely 'drifting about'.<sup>92</sup> Janis Stout goes so far as to argue that Cather sought escape from herself by 'burying her identity in that of Bishop Lamy'.<sup>93</sup> Lewis recalls of the trip from Laguna to Ácoma, for instance, that 'there is no need to tell of that journey – Willa Cather has told it in the *Archbishop*', an approach reinforced by the writer's description of her research methods:

A novel is not the result of a mere interest and the realization that in a field lies the basis for a novel. One must live the life, without thought of a novel until suddenly in its living there comes to a person the understanding that here is a story worth writing down. [...] I spent a large part of fifteen years in the Southwest, living the life of the Southwestern people. I have ridden thousands of miles on ranch ponies, and the experiences I have related in the stories to which you refer [in *Archbishop*] are not based upon fancies or upon reading of that territory and those people, but upon my own life and experiences there.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>90</sup> Cather inscribed a copy of the book for Austin: 'For Mary Austin, in whose lovely study I wrote the last chapters of this book'. However, the amount of work undertaken at Austin's is disputed. Shepley Sergeant claims Cather only 'walked up to Mrs. Austin's in the afternoons to write a few letters' but Pearce has surmised that these afternoons may have been spent writing the novel. Sergeant, *Willa Cather: A Memoir*, p. 235; T. M. Pearce, *Literary America, 1903-1934: The Mary Austin Letters* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979), p. 171.

<sup>91</sup> James Woodress, *Willa Cather: Her Life and Art* (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p. 220.

<sup>92</sup> Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 231.

<sup>93</sup> Woodress, p. 218; Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 235.

<sup>94</sup> Lewis, *Willa Cather Living*, p. 146; 'Famous Nebraska Authoress Visits New Superior Hospital', *Superior Express*, 12 January 1928, in *Willa Cather in Person: Interviews, Speeches, and Letters*, ed. by L. Brent Bohlke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), pp. 101-03 (p. 103).

Since her historical subject matter necessarily negated the kind of observational research conducted by some of her colony peers, Cather attempted to understand her characters by following in their footsteps and seeing the southwest through their eyes, professing to be 'hot on the trail of her old priests' on both of the extensive southwestern trips.<sup>95</sup>

This trail, assembled from Cather's impressions of the region, was augmented by poring over whatever books she could find in local libraries and museums throughout her trips.<sup>96</sup> As such, the simplicity of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*'s rhetorical style echoes the sparse rationality of such historical tracts. Yet this style also reveals a distinctly artistic model for the novel too. After seeing Puvis de Chavannes' series of frescoes depicting Saint Genevieve in Paris in 1902, Cather aspired to produce a book whose prose mirrored de Chavannes' simplicity of style. In his review of the novel Michael Williams similarly praised the novel as 'proof of the power of the true artist to penetrate and understand and to express things'.<sup>97</sup> Williams' summation aligns Cather's project with that of her fellow art-colonists to read and summarize the cultures of local peoples through a combination of knowledge and imagination.

Cather addressed the distinctive mix of approaches in a letter to the *Commonweal*, proclaiming the book to be a 'work of the imagination in which a writer tries to present the experiences and emotions of a group of people by the light of his own'.<sup>98</sup> Where uneasy categorization bothered some reviewers, Cather gleefully embraced this ambiguity by calling her work a 'narrative' since, like her fellow colonists, Cather's creative imagination shaped what she took to be elements of historical fact that were incorporated into her text.<sup>99</sup> Lewis praises Cather's 'great gift for imaginative historical reconstruction' while Sevcik's claim that the book's mix of fictional and real-life elements provides 'the reader with a more complete picture of the historical past' raises a

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<sup>95</sup> Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 231.

<sup>96</sup> Lewis, *Willa Cather Living*, p. 140.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Williams, 'Willa Cather's Masterpiece', *Commonweal*, 6 (1927), 490-92 (p. 491).

<sup>98</sup> Willa Cather, 'On *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', in *Willa Cather on Writing*, pp. 3-13 (pp. 12-13).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

more problematic issue.<sup>100</sup> By grounding her narrative in Howlett's historical biography, his perspective is consistently evoked in the novel. That is to say, Cather failed to recognise Howlett's bias towards his mentor or the subjectivity of accounts described by Father Machebeuf. In her desire to adhere to the accuracy of seemingly empirical records, Cather replicated deep-rooted negative attitudes towards Hispanic people. As such, Cather's Hispanic characters reiterate the diatribes Howlett levels towards Mexicans, himself repeating the impressions of an English traveller in New Mexico:

My first impressions of New Mexico were anything but favorable, either to the country or the people. The population [...] was wretched-looking, and every countenance seemed marked by vice and debauchery. [...] In every village we entered, the women flocked round us begging for tobacco or money, the men loafing about, pilfering every thing they could lay their hands on [...] and every where filth and dirt reigned triumphant. [...] Imposing no restraint upon their passions, a shameless and universal concubinage exists, and a total disregard of moral laws, to which it would be impossible to find a parallel in any country calling itself civilized.<sup>101</sup>

A similar litany of insults appears in numerous nineteenth-century accounts of Hispanics by Europeans and Anglo-Americans, all of which are echoed in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Labels of Spanish and Mexican ignorance, depravity, vanity, decadence, duplicity and laziness were all transported from England with the original settlers who saw themselves as 'guardians against Spanish penetration into the northern regions of the New World'.<sup>102</sup> When America gained independence from Britain it inherited the British-Spanish rivalry which came to be transplanted onto Anglo- versus Spanish-America: 'Centuries of rivalry between Englishmen and Spaniards in Europe and in America over trade, empire, and religion on both public and private levels had

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<sup>100</sup> Lewis, *Willa Cather Living*, pp. 119-20; Seveck, 'Catholic Expansionism and the Politics of Depression', p. 191.

<sup>101</sup> Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf*, pp. 60-62.

<sup>102</sup> Raymund A. Paredes, 'The Origins of Anti-Mexican Sentiment in the United States', in *Race and US Policy in the Ages of Territorial and Market Expansion, 1840-1900*, ed. by E. Nathaniel Gates (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 61-88 (p. 63). Google ebook.

conditioned all participants in their respective roles'.<sup>103</sup> The novel's Hispanic characters reiterate this long tradition of Hispanophobia which came to be known as the Black Legend, many of whose traits are rooted in the prevailing belief in Spanish decadence:

One need only glance at the dynastic history of Spain in the seventeenth century to see that decadence penetrated the highest levels of state. It is a record of illegitimacy, inbreeding, insanity, incest, corruption, depravity, and gross neglect of the responsibilities of office.<sup>104</sup>

Such indolence is due, the legend goes, to the fact that 'Spaniards have never assigned a high priority or value to personal toil, a fact that is surely related to their national decadence. [...] None of the achievements of Spain throughout history has been the result of work'.<sup>105</sup> The tale of Fray Baltazar chronicled in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* encapsulates this affront, describing a priest at Ácoma whose comforts have been achieved through a 'heavy tribute of labour':

He was of a tyrannical and overbearing disposition and bore a hard hand on the natives. [...] He took the best of their corn and beans and squashes for his table, and selected the choicest portions when they slaughtered a sheep, chose their best hides to carpet his dwelling.<sup>106</sup>

Indeed, Fray Baltazar's anger, an outburst of which leads to his killing of a serving boy over a spilled dish, is provoked by his desire to flaunt these indulgent living conditions:

It was clear that the Friar at Ácoma lived more after the flesh than after the spirit. [...] One summer the Friar, who did not make long journeys now that he had grown large in girth, decided that he would like company, – someone to admire his fine garden, his ingenious kitchen, his airy loggia with its rugs and water jars.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Karl M. Schmitt, *Mexico and the United States, 1821-1973: Conflict and Coexistence* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> Philip Wayne Powell, *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices affecting United States Relations with the Hispanic World* (New York: Basic, 1971), p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>106</sup> Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (London: Virago, 1981), p. 104. All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.

Reinforcing this array of traditional ethnic markings and negative attitudes towards Hispanic Americans also allowed Cather to employ her minor characters as exemplars of the seven deadly sins. Historical information needed to be balanced with such artistic tropes, Cather contends, since 'too much information [is ...] rather deadening'.<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, however, in a book containing myriad types of people and at least three ethnicities, only one of these sins is embodied by a non-Hispanic character: the slothful Anglo-American Buck Scales. All of the remaining sins are depicted through a series of Hispanic figures: Fray Baltazar's anger, Doña Isabella's pride, the covetousness of Padre Lucero, Trinidad's gluttony and Padre Martínez's lust. The conflict between Father Latour and the licentious Padre Martínez is a particularly useful literary device as it provides Cather's episodic narrative with a sense of linearity. Cast as the classic villain, Martínez becomes an entertaining foil to Latour's missionary hero. However, in his use as stock character, Martínez is maligned beyond descriptions in Howlett's biography. In a letter to Luhan Lewis noted that all the books Cather scoured about Padre Martínez did, in fact, present different versions of his story.<sup>109</sup> Thus, despite her extensive historical research, Cather readily diverges from her source materials in the name of artistic license. Indeed, Cather's choice to use Martínez's real name and to ignore the spectrum of accounts of his life are tantamount to historical slander. Long dead and gone, such Hispanic figures are rendered even more mute than the Native Americans represented elsewhere in colony-produced literature.

By departing, at times, from the 'facts' of these historical records, Cather accurately reproduces the prevailing rhetoric of nineteenth-century accounts which no doubt formed the bulk of her historical research. After all, the work of missionaries like Lamy and Machebeuf was paramount in the wake of the Mexican cession of land, since military domination was merely the beginning of imperial projects. The stance of such nineteenth-century accounts exemplifies the ideology that the dominant culture must 'subvert the structure of the group's ideological

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<sup>108</sup> Cather, 'On *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Letter Lewis to Luhan, 20 July [1925], quoted in Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 239 n. 31.



consciousness' by making it believe that it has not 'surrendered so much as availed itself of a more progressive sociocultural national experience'.<sup>110</sup> By couching her narrative in an adherence to the history books, Cather merely replicated their bias and stereotypes. On a tour of Alta California in the 1840s, for instance, New England attorney Thomas Jefferson Farnham described 'the Spanish population of the Californias' as 'in every way a poor apology of European extraction': 'Destitute of industry themselves, they compel the poor Indian to labor for them. [... They] are an imbecile, pusillanimous, race of men, and unfit to control the destinies of the country. [...] They must fade away'.<sup>111</sup> Farnham's summation here invokes another common theme of this contemporary Hispanophobia: the rhetoric of inevitable decline. In replicating their Black Legend stereotypes, Cather also emphasizes the idea in these American accounts of a Hispanic race doomed not to be wiped out but to passively 'fade away'. As such, *Archbishop* seems to suggest that white, non-Hispanic Europeans rather than Hispanic Americans will 'shape the course of the American southwest towards civilization'.<sup>112</sup> Perhaps, then, the death announced in Cather's title not only relates to the Archbishop's fate, or even to the multitude of characters whose demises the narrative chronicles, but also implies the inevitable decline and death of seemingly degenerate ethnic cultures in the southwest. From this perspective the new, more satisfying way of life that colonists sought in these places can heed the warnings of negative cultural traits and evolve into something better by incorporating beneficial aspects of Native American culture.

This idea is reinforced by the representation of Spanish-American iconography in many of Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexican paintings which focus on Catholic crucifixes within the southwestern landscape (figure 1; p. 196). As the painter reflected, 'I saw the crosses so often – and often in unexpected places – like a thin veil of the Catholic Church spread over the New Mexican

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<sup>110</sup> Genaro M. Padilla, *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 32.

<sup>111</sup> David J. Weber, "'Scarce more than Apes": Historical Roots of Anglo-American Stereotypes of Mexicans in the Border Region', in *Race and US Foreign Policy*, ed. by E. Nathaniel Gates (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 89-102 (p. 89). Google ebook.

<sup>112</sup> Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 240.

landscape'.<sup>113</sup> Comparing their presence to a funeral accoutrement, O'Keeffe's paintings echo Cather's elegiac but detached tone towards a supposedly natural cultural decline. Like the paintings of animal bones which O'Keeffe also produced during her stays in New Mexico, these cruciform images emphasize the artist's engagement with death as part of natural lifecycles and the individual's 'minor role in the grand drama of the cosmos'.<sup>114</sup> As an early review of O'Keeffe's southwestern paintings suggested, 'It is intellectually thrilling to find Miss O'Keeffe adopting so quickly the Spanish idea that where life manifests itself in greatest ebullience there too is death most formidable'.<sup>115</sup> The preoccupation with death exhibited by O'Keeffe's crosses carries an inference of degeneration and inevitable cultural decline. The only remnants of these people are the small markers of their disappearance, completing the inevitable circle of life. Placed within the New Mexican landscape, the decline of Spanish culture in the southwest is naturalized: an inevitable conclusion quite removed from Anglo-American intervention.

Anglo-American cultural hegemony in the southwest is thus presented as the result of natural social evolution. In Cather's novel, New Mexico is described as being annexed 'to' the US, rather than the more active 'by', suggesting a natural concurrence which ignores American involvement.<sup>116</sup> This is reinforced by the depiction of another historical figure, Kit Carson, whose name remains unaltered in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. But where Padre Martínez is vilified in spite of empirical evidence to the contrary, the Anglo-American frontiersman Carson receives a markedly sympathetic depiction. Downplaying his role in the extermination of Native Americans in Canyon de Chelly as 'misguided', Cather removes Carson from responsibility by asserting that he 'was a soldier under orders, and he did a soldier's brutal work'.<sup>117</sup> By whitewashing Anglo-American

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<sup>113</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life*, p. 516.

<sup>114</sup> Jonathan Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 63.

<sup>115</sup> Henry McBride, 'O'Keeffe in Taos', *New York Sun*, 8 January 1930, quoted in Robinson, *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life*, p. 351.

<sup>116</sup> Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, p. 199.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 293-94. The Battle of Canyon de Chelly took place in present day Arizona in 1864. Under the leadership of Colonel Christopher H. (Kit) Carson, the United States Army destroyed Navajo camps, crops and supplies, killing and capturing thousands of Navajos. Those who survived were deported from their homeland

history and denigrating the Mexican, Cather 'defined in exaggerated terms the conflict between the two cultures they represented'.<sup>118</sup> As such, the southwest presented by Cather is a place filled with cultural diversity but also a place which is subject to the inevitable forces of Anglo cultural superiority over supposedly lesser minority cultures. As Stout surmises, 'those who came to possess America did so, it seems, for reasons of divine plan'.<sup>119</sup> However, Stout mediates her précis of *Archbishop* by adding that troubling elements in the text belie Cather's 'misgivings about the process of enlightened dominion that she overtly celebrates'.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, as Nicholas Birns astutely points out, a promotion of 'the evolutionist historicism [...] premised upon an affirmative belief in American expansionism' would have been better served by greater focus on Carson, who takes a minor role in the overall narrative.<sup>121</sup>

Expressing views on the southwest's ethnic cultures through the prism of her French missionary, instead of the Anglo-American Carson, suggests that Cather acknowledges the limits of knowledge that can be attained by a visitor to this region. As Birns writes:

The culturally disruptive 'French' approach highlights Cather's own distance from the scene, and represents her own position as outsider and stranger. Cather's relation to New Mexico is no more intimate than Father Latour's is at the beginning of the novel.<sup>122</sup>

Birns' defence of Cather's representation of ethnicity also informs my exploration of western art colonies. Like art-colonists in New Mexico, Latour grapples with how to negotiate cultural difference in the southwest. As a visitor herself, Cather's work resonates with an element of embedded

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and made to embark on the subsequent arduous journey to Bosque Redondo Reservation that became known as the Long Walk of the Navajo since Navajos were forced to walk gruelling distances at gunpoint. Navajo oral histories elaborate on reports from American soldiers: 'The trip is on foot. People are shot on the spot if they say they are tired or sick or if they stop to help someone. [...] They are heartbroken that because their families die on the way'. Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), p. 55. Google ebook.

<sup>118</sup> Stout, *Willa Cather*, p. 246.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>121</sup> Nicholas Birns, 'Building the Cathedral: Imagination, Christianity, and Progress in Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', in *Critical Insights: Willa Cather*, ed. by Birns (Pasadena, CA: Salem, 2012), pp. 237-59 (p. 241).

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

autobiography in which she addresses the partiality and subjectivity of her own perspective. Such a stance is intimated in an early scene through the mouthpiece of a Cardinal in Rome who, having been corrected that Native Americans in the southwest do not 'dwell in wigwams', responds that 'I see your redskins through Fenimore Cooper, and I like them so'.<sup>123</sup> Like the Cardinal's view of Native Americans, Latour's negative perception of Hispanic Americans is filtered through his own culture and background. Like Cather herself, Latour's knowledge of the region's cultural diversity is limited by his position as foreigner just as trips to the southwest could not be expected to enable Cather 'to write of the New Mexican land and people with the depth and learning of a Mary Austin'.<sup>124</sup> This choice of comparison is, of course, of particular relevance to my discussion. As well as highlighting colonists' different levels of engagement towards the southwest's cultural landscape, reference to Austin also indicates the 'depth' of understanding attempted by art-colonists. From this perspective, Cather's representation of local peoples in the southwest challenges the appropriative assumptions of 'a Mary Austin' or, indeed, an Oliver La Farge or an Ansel Adams. The overtly stereotyped portrayal of Hispanic figures in the novel thus comes to symbolize the inability of interlopers like art-colonists to properly understand and communicate the region's non-English speaking cultures. Art-colonists are as much outsiders in New Mexico as Father Latour and are thus subject to the same restrictions of knowledge, despite their attempts at penetration and association. These appropriative efforts are embodied, ironically, in Austin's chastisement of Cather's choice of subject matter. Condemning the effect of a French cathedral in Santa Fe, Austin declared that 'We have never got over it'.<sup>125</sup>

Cather alludes to these limits of knowledge in describing her initial attraction to the southwest's mission churches: 'No record of them could be as real as they are themselves. They are

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<sup>123</sup> Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> Birns, 'Building the Cathedral: Imagination, Christianity, and Progress in Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', p. 245.

<sup>125</sup> James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 395 (my emphasis).

their own story'.<sup>126</sup> Suggesting that some things are uninterpretable, Cather recognises the limits of colonist endeavours to read and understand the cultures of Native and Spanish-speaking populations in the southwest. This is, however, mitigated by Cather's choice to overcome such an obstacle by producing a 'record' and 'story' of these supposedly intangible things. Cather's confidence at tackling these seemingly uninterpretable stories denotes a more subtle means of imperialism than the Anglo-American expansionism of her protagonists. In spite of her position as an outsider, she suggests, it is only she who can adequately interpret the southwest. Reinforcing her colony peers' suppression of Native and Spanish-speaking voices to communicate their own narratives, Cather presents Anglo-American art-colonists as the most appropriate and most able interpreters of this culturally diverse region.<sup>127</sup>

Whether this was Cather's intention remains unclear, but the possibility of a deliberate portrayal of stereotypes in *Archbishop* is nonetheless informative for understanding colonist engagements with other cultures. After all, Birns' suggestion that a 'more Hispanic centred attempt' would now be criticised more heavily is backed up by my discussion of La Farge's representation of Native Americans. Notwithstanding the debate about her intention, such arguments are ultimately undermined by Cather's claims of historical accuracy. When informed by a *San Francisco Chronicle* interviewer that some readers and reviewers were taking the book as pure biography, Cather responded 'That won't hurt them. [...] I think I was accurate where accuracy was needed'.<sup>128</sup> Contrary to Cather's assertion, her choices about the representation of Padre Martínez rest on knowledge of a spectrum of rare books not available to Cather's readers (then as now). Without this context it would be impossible to acknowledge and understand the decisions Cather had made.

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<sup>126</sup> Cather, 'On *Death Comes for the Archbishop*', p. 5.

<sup>127</sup> Hélène Valance, 'American Nights: The Nocturne in American Art and Visual Culture, 1890-1917', Courtauld Institute of Art, London. 23 April 2015.

<sup>128</sup> Harold Small, 'Willa Cather tells "secret" of novel's title', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 March 1931, quoted in *Willa Cather in Person*, ed. by Bohlke, pp. 108-09 (p. 108).

**Figure 1:** Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Cross*, New Mexico, 1929, oil on canvas



## Ansel Adams

Ansel Adams is an example of an art-colonist who came to western art colonies to experiment artistically. His engagement with Native American culture celebrates its distinctive beauty but only as a means to develop his photography skills. Adams' approach is a sensitive investigation of the most appropriate and accurate approach to communicating difference, but aesthetic experimentation supersedes these intentions in the photographs he includes in *Taos Pueblo*, a collaborative work in which Mary Austin produced poetic prose to accompany Adams' photographs. In this way Adams commodifies Native Americans and replicates stereotypes of the 'vanished American' and of an extinct Native American culture. Martin Padget and Daniel Worden both present similarly measured responses to Adams' Taos work in their respective articles, with Worden asserting that one does not need to condone problematic elements of representation in the book to recognise that they contribute to the book's points of view.<sup>129</sup> However, they, like I, ultimately assert that *Taos Pueblo* raises a number of concerns with regard to the representation of Native American culture.

*Taos Pueblo* was a lavishly presented photobook incorporating an essay by Austin on Taos Pueblo's history and living culture followed by photographs taken by Adams and hand-printed by him for each copy of the book.<sup>130</sup> Published in a limited run of one hundred and carrying a hefty price tag of \$75, the book's grandiose productive values were sealed with the authors' signatures. As the minute consideration of these design choices attest, Adams' engagement with other cultures in the southwest is, like Willa Cather, as much about himself as about a desire to understand and communicate cultural difference, but Adams is more self-consciously distanced in his engagement.

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<sup>129</sup> Daniel Worden, 'Landscape Culture: Ansel Adams and Mary Austin's *Taos Pueblo*', *Criticism*, 55 (2013), 69-94; Martin Padget, 'Native Americans, the Photobook and the Southwest: Ansel Adams's and Mary Austin's *Taos Pueblo*', in *Writing with Light: Words and Photographs in American Texts*, ed. by Mick Gidley (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 19-42. Worden is referring specifically to Austin's text in this remark but his approach is equally applicable to Adams' photographs and the combined effect of the two.

<sup>130</sup> I follow Padget's use of Martin Parr and Gerry Badger in defining a photobook as 'a book – with or without text – where the work's primary message is carried by photographs'. *The Photobook: A History* (London: Phaidon, 2004), pp. 6-7.

His work is one of the clearest examples of formal experimentation at the colony and, as such, analysis of these photographs sheds light on the ways in which Adams took advantage of the acute difference of Taos Pueblo culture in order to engage in the aesthetic innovations that were fostered by the art colony milieu. Utilizing photography's ability to capture a moment and hold it infinitely still as well as exploring the medium's aesthetic possibilities, Adams' representation of Native American culture highlights how colonists' endeavours to understand and communicate local peoples of the southwest were grounded in observation as well as showcasing the interdisciplinary tactics employed by southwestern art-colonists to depict and adequately understand the region's indigenous peoples.

Adams first visited New Mexico in 1927 to experiment artistically. His companion on this trip, his mentor Albert Bender, had taken a liking to Adams' early work but thought travel would expose the photographer to 'a wider range of influences' both in terms of contact with potentially inspiring people and places, and interaction with artists working in different modes and styles.<sup>131</sup> He found both in the New Mexican art colonies. Adams' biographer notes that the photographer was entranced both by Santa Fe and Taos' 'old adobes [and] Indian pueblos' and by its 'cosmopolitan world of artists and writers'.<sup>132</sup> Both of these aspects presented the artist with previously unknown ways to live. Like many other colonists, Adams' artistic interpretation of Native American culture reveals the extent to which these Anglo-American visitors were looking to learn from other cultures as a means to developing and understanding their more satisfying sense of community at the art colony. Adams was introduced to many of the colony residents in New Mexico and attended Witter Bynner's infamously bacchanalian soirees, finding the idea 'that serious artists could have this much fun' both 'reassuring and liberating'.<sup>133</sup> It was at one of Bynner's parties that Adams met Austin, whom Bender felt shared the photographer's attitude to art and to the southwestern landscape; a similarity which could be well displayed in a collaborative work.

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<sup>131</sup> Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, p. 58.

<sup>132</sup> Mary Street Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), p. 68.

<sup>133</sup> Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, p. 68.



A year of correspondence ensued while the pair tried to decide on a subject for their joint venture and navigated local Native American tribes' varying attitudes towards Anglo admittance. Both had been keen to portray New Mexico's Native American cultures, but this was difficult to negotiate. Adams suggested Ácoma, for instance, near the start of their deliberations but Austin explained that a filmmaker was already attempting to gain permission to record this village. Austin doubted that the filmmaker would be successful, since 'he tried the Hopi and failed. [...] He seems to know little about Indians'.<sup>134</sup> It is interesting but, perhaps, not surprising that Austin places the success or failure of this endeavour squarely on the shoulders of the Anglo opportunist since she viewed herself as a unique ambassador to New Mexico's local cultures. In reality, however, many Native American tribes in the region would have been familiar with intrusive and exploitative Anglo visits established in nineteenth-century ethnographic reports and the growing popularity of widely-marketed travel guides.<sup>135</sup> On the other hand, such exploratory trips provided Native American tribes the opportunity to combat Anglo-American assimilation and acculturation, so bemoaned by art-colonists in New Mexico, but at the expense of their difference from Anglo-American culture being illuminated to an exploitative degree. As such, the Hopi may have felt torn between their dire economic situation, the land having been ravaged by drought, and a growing resistance against the promotion and fetishization of their culture.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, if the filmmaker was unsuccessful the Ácoma might be further jaded by the experience and, if successful, their picturesque exoticism would have already been revealed to the world.

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<sup>134</sup> Letter Austin to Adams, 17 June 1928, quoted in Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, p. 71.

<sup>135</sup> Padgett, *Indian Country*, p. 180. See also James Clifford, 'Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology', in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 52-91. This problem persists today. On a research trip to New Mexico in 2014 I noticed many tourists openly flouting Taos Pueblo's rules about not photographing residents without their prior permission.

<sup>136</sup> Alfonso Ortiz, *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest* (Washington: Smithsonian Institutional Press, 1979), pp. 524-32.

Austin and Adams were subsequently granted access to Taos thanks to Tony Lujan's unique position as a 'bridge between cultures'.<sup>137</sup> Still an important member of the Taos community, Tony Lujan managed to negotiate full access to Taos Pueblo for a \$25 fee and a copy of the finished book.<sup>138</sup> As Austin articulated in her anecdote of driving in the desert, cited earlier in this chapter, Tony Lujan provided a link between the world of the Anglo art-colonists and the region's indigenous cultures. This was extremely beneficial for Austin and Adams, since Taos had a complicated relationship with Anglo artists. To a certain extent, Taos residents had long been accustomed to the presence of Anglo artists since Blumenschein and the other artists who became the Taos Society of Artists had arrived in the area. In many ways this provided welcome commercial opportunities. Interviewing Taos residents many decades later, Nancy Wood spoke to Marie Mondragon, also known by her tribal name Dancing Lake: 'In her younger days, Dancing Lake was a famous model for Taos artists of the 1920s, who paid her a few dollars to pose for paintings they later sold for thousands of dollars each'.<sup>139</sup> The concluding part of this quotation reveals a resentment which no doubt fuelled the reticence towards admitting Anglo artists into Taos Pueblo. Indeed, animosity between Taos Pueblo and the popular Indian Detours, established by art-colonist Erna Fergusson, had flared just two years earlier. Ascertaining that other pueblos stood to benefit more than Taos Pueblo through the sale of arts and crafts to visiting tourists, the governor of Taos Pueblo proposed an admission charge. The tour organizers worried that this would commercialize the pueblo but eventually compromised by allowing a drummer to accompany the visitors and accept payment for his performance.<sup>140</sup> Austin and Adams continue this rhetoric of concern over possible commercialization, with Austin praising the locale in her essay by attesting that 'only Taos the proud, Taos the rebellious [...] holds its tribal integrity'.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Lujan, 'A Bridge between Cultures', p. 297.

<sup>138</sup> Adams, *An Autobiography*, p.90. Hammond notes that the fee may have been as high as \$100 (p. 152, n. 95).

<sup>139</sup> Nancy Wood, *Taos Pueblo* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p. 131.

<sup>140</sup> Diane H. Thomas, *The Southwest Indian Detours: The Story of the Fred Harvey/Santa Fe Railway Experiment in 'Detourism'* (Phoenix, AR: Hunter, 1978), pp. 186-87.

<sup>141</sup> Austin, 'Taos', in *Taos Pueblo*, pp. 1-14 (p.4).

With their subject matter decided and confirmed, Adams returned to New Mexico in April 1929. Staying first with Austin in Santa Fe, he moved to Mabel Dodge Luhan's in Taos to complete the photography for the book in May and June of that year. Austin mirrored Adams' move when completing the accompanying text, staying with Luhan in order to exploit 'the inspirational mood of the place'.<sup>142</sup> Both colonists displayed a desire to immerse themselves in Pueblo culture in order to observe Native American practices as well as absorb the spirit of this culture. This approach emphasizes the colony's provision of opportunities to experiment both socially and aesthetically.

Adams threw himself into the work, spending as much time in the pueblo and taking as many practice shots as possible. He even refused to stop during a sandstorm and was promptly admonished by an old Native American who warned him that the east wind brought evil. Adams ignored the warning and carried on his work until, mere hours later, he suffered a burst appendix.<sup>143</sup> Even this did not keep him from his dedicated study for very long. After two weeks of recuperation in nearby Albuquerque, Adams returned to the pueblo to finish his work.<sup>144</sup> Staying at the Taos art colony provided Adams with the proximity necessary to observe and attempt to understand pueblo culture. Indeed, the book's respectful dedication acknowledges the human interaction involved in creating the book: 'To our friends at Taos Pueblo to whose interested and intelligent cooperation is owed the historic and human authenticity of this book'.<sup>145</sup>

For Adams, explorations of cultural difference facilitated formal innovation. Adams engaged with something different in order to do something different. Returning to Luhan's in 1930, for instance, Adams found all of Los Gallos' guest accommodation occupied and so shared a guesthouse with photographer Paul Strand and his wife Rebecca.<sup>146</sup> In his autobiography Adams recalls: 'My

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<sup>142</sup> Letter Austin to Adams, 9 September 1929, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>143</sup> Nancy Wynne Newhall, *Ansel Adams: The Eloquent Light* (Millerton, NY: Aperture, 1980), p. 60.

<sup>144</sup> Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, p. 71.

<sup>145</sup> Ansel Easton Adams and Mary Austin, *Taos Pueblo* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977).

<sup>146</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan had extended an invitation to Paul Strand and his wife Rebecca in 1926. Rebecca was the first to accept Luhan's invitation, staying at Los Gallos with Georgia O'Keeffe in the summer of 1929. Rebecca and Paul visited together the following summer and for a further two consecutive summers. Here Strand continued to develop his modernist photographic style with depictions of the southwestern landscapes

understanding of photography was crystalized that afternoon as I realised the great potential of the medium as an expressive art'.<sup>147</sup> With only twelve photographs included in the volume, the *Taos Pueblo* photographs reflect a considered, precise representation of this New Mexican village as well as the photographer's aesthetic experimentation. Adams presents sparse, uncluttered images which focus the viewer on his photographic technique and formal choices, an approach which proves both artistically interesting but also problematic in its representation of Native American culture. As Padget notes, attention to Adams' progression as an artist is reinforced by the expensive production choices for the book. Indeed, Padget goes so far as to say that *Taos Pueblo* represented a 'showpiece for his current and future work'.<sup>148</sup>

Adams' move towards artistic improvisation was sparked by a trip to another western art colony. In June 1926 Bender took him to Carmel where he met Robinson Jeffers, a luminary of modernist poetry. Adams was in awe of Jeffers' determination to be unconventional in his work, a principle he felt could be adopted into photography. As his biographer Jonathan Spaulding explains:

Jeffers' quest to pare his lines to a functionalist simplicity was an example of a fundamental principle of modernism in all the arts. [...] In photography, too, efforts were beginning to emphasize rather than disguise what they considered the essential characteristics of the camera image, its optical precision and clarity, its ability to capture an instant and make it timeless.<sup>149</sup>

Adams' New Mexican photography highlights his developing approach to photography's artistic potential, as Eva Weber writes:

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and adobe buildings. Rebecca Busselle and Trudy Wilner Stack, *Paul Strand, Southwest* (New York: Aperture, 2004), pp. 82-98.

<sup>147</sup> Ansel Adams, *An Autobiography* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), p. 109.

<sup>148</sup> Padget, 'Native Americans, the Photobook and the Southwest', p. 29.

<sup>149</sup> Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, p. 61.

By the frequent use of extreme close-ups and of strong contrasts of light and dark, he sought to capture texture, geometry, rhythm, and pattern in an often two-dimensional effect that approached and echoed the modernist trends of cubism and abstraction.<sup>150</sup>

Weber's assertions are evident throughout *Taos Pueblo*. A bright sky dominates the composition of *North House, Kiva Poles and Thunder Clouds* (figure 2; p. 214), for instance, throwing the trees and buildings into extreme shadow. Adams' approach here utilizes the camera as a technological tool as well as emphasizing the formal qualities of his subject matter, rendering them little more than blocks of black. The stark rectangular buildings on the left of the frame echo the shape of the photograph itself, highlighting the innate artifice of photography as an aesthetic medium. Rejecting the soft focus and decorative quality of pictorial photography, the landscape here is depicted as a series of sharp lines and shadows. This sense of stability and natural rhythm is echoed in Austin's accompanying prose, which often uses literary devices to echo the staccato shapes of Adams' photographs:

At the turn of the seasons, the turn of the Sun's journey, the young men of the summer and winter divisions of clans, strip and race back and forth, against each other, to encourage the Sun for its annual course; to intimate to the cloud people, the Surpassing-People-of-the-Middle-Heaven, how they also should seasonally race across the sky to bring the growing rain.<sup>151</sup>

Austin employs a litany of long, often monosyllabic sentences to describe this distinctive and intriguing culture, mirroring Adams' photographic approach. As Spaulding articulates, the text and photographs of *Taos Pueblo* mirror each other, with Adams' composition and Austin's rhythm reflecting the 'sturdy repetitions of pueblo architecture'.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Eva Weber, *Ansel Adams and the Photographers of the American West* (North Dighton, MA: World Publications Group, 2002), p. 18.

<sup>151</sup> Mary Austin, 'Taos', p.10.

<sup>152</sup> *Ansel Adams*, p. 81.

Overall, though, Austin's lyrical text appears incongruous with Adams' stark geometric meditations. Despite containing aspects of history and anthropology in its brief overview of Taos Pueblo through the centuries, the tone of Austin's piece is indicative of her colony work: poetic rather than empirical, suggesting a sense of Native American culture as mysterious and herself as chosen interpreter of this usually inscrutable way of life. As such, much of the text echoes Oliver La Farge's sentimental romanticism:

To take the natural resource of life-giving water out of its accidental channel, to lead it gently, with due consideration of its times of flood and scarcity, its own natural tendency to do this or that irrespective of man's wish, to treasure and tend the water as a commodity taxing the interest and intelligence of the whole community, that is the economic life of Taos.<sup>153</sup>

Like La Farge's fiction, these differing approaches in *Taos Pueblo* reinforce the colonist stance that only a combination of empirical evidence and artistic impressions can accurately penetrate and communicate cultural difference. Furthermore, it is important to note, however, that both Adams' and Austin's representations are inherently visual. A basis in observation not only links Austin's and Adams' contributions to *Taos Pueblo*, but both artists' combination of visual sensibility with aesthetic imagination highlights the specific interdisciplinary techniques employed by art-colonists in New Mexico. Subsequently, these markedly different presentations of information are not, in fact, as antithetical as they at first appear. As Worden astutely notes, modernism and regionalism are political counterparts:

While modernism has often been thought of as 'the antithesis of regionalism,' they are better thought of as intertwined and mutually constitutive aesthetics [... that] share an investment in art as a mode of social reform, an element often recognised in regionalist art

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<sup>153</sup> Austin, 'Taos', p. 8.

but less so in [...] modernist aesthetics [which] were codified as apolitical, impersonal, and self-reflexive by the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>154</sup>

Prior to this codification, Worden argues, regionalism and modernism shared a desire to render ‘a living place into the reified notions of culture and art’.<sup>155</sup> This notion is identifiable throughout the textual and visual aspects of *Taos Pueblo*, as is the Anglo-American colonist’s perception of their unique opportunity to successfully execute this cultural alchemy. Although often differing in approach, Adams’ formalist aesthetic and Austin’s sentimentalized prose are both concerned with the summation of a culture and, in particular, the beneficial combination of genre and tone to achieve this, which is characteristic of art-colonists’ approach to cultural difference.

Other art-colonists mirrored Adams’ abstraction of Pueblo architecture and appropriation of Native American culture, focusing on a modernist approach to form over the living cultures of their chosen subject matter. This is exemplified by Adams in the last picture of the *Taos Pueblo* collection: *St. Francis Church, Ranchos de Taos* (figure 3; p. 214). Pictured from the back, the building is entirely removed from its function as a church; indeed, the monolith barely resembles a building at all. This reinforces Adams’ ‘commitment to light and form as the essential building blocks of a picture’; an aesthetic project clearly encapsulated in *Taos Pueblo*.<sup>156</sup> But without its functional façade, the building is reduced only to form, lines and blocks within the New Mexican landscape. By defamiliarizing the church’s social function Adams highlights the organic appearance of adobe architecture as well as the distinctive shapes and contours created by this structural style. The tonal gradation and sharp diagonal lines formed by shadows and marks on the ground emphasize the solidity of the structure while the camera’s low angle reinforces the building’s imposing stature and highlights the point at which ground meets building. Of this picture, Adams asserts that ‘the building is not really large, but it appears immense. The forms are fully functional [...] and all together seem

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<sup>154</sup> Worden, p. 70.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>156</sup> Weston J. Naef, ‘Afterword’, in *Taos Pueblo*, by Mary Austin and Ansel Adams (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), unnumbered pp. 65-67.

an outcropping of the earth rather than merely an object constructed upon it'.<sup>157</sup> Austin emphasizes this interpretation in the book's text, asserting that 'the church at Ranchos, more than any of those early structures, has the deep rooted, grown-from-the-soil look of Pueblo buildings'.<sup>158</sup> Her narrative suggests a noble mission to restore a lost Native American presence in the region as well as invoking the anti-Spanish sentiments we saw earlier in Cather's work. From this perspective, art-colonists' focus on the only reminder of pre-Conquistadores Ranchos de Taos challenges a prevailing situation in which 'the villages of the Amerind aboriginals pass, they decay and disappear'.<sup>159</sup>

Adams perhaps chose to depict the church from this perspective because it was the view seen when travelling on the road between the Santa Fe and Taos colonies, a route often traversed by colonists. Capturing the church from this angle was a popular choice of art-colonists. As well as Adams' rendition, painters Georgia O'Keeffe and John Marin and photographer Strand all depict the back of the building and reinforce Adams' impression of the building's organic quality (figures 4, 5 and 6; pp. 215-16).<sup>160</sup> In O'Keeffe's rendition, *Ranchos Church, New Mexico*, these lines and blocks are depicted as soft curved shapes emerging out of the desert floor. The flesh-toned palette emphasizes these undulating lines, mirroring the distinctive mounds of sand which dot the New Mexican landscape. The juxtaposition between the building and the clear azure sky draws a correlation between the man-made structure and the natural mountains of the region, further reinforced by the deep shadows which enhance the three dimensional quality of the subject. As one of O'Keeffe's earliest New Mexican paintings, *Ranchos Church, New Mexico* highlights the development of her progressive and individualistic artistic style. However, these careful choices of representation also remove the object, the church, from its Spanish context. As a traditional mission

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<sup>157</sup> Ansel Adams, *Examples: The Making of 40 Photographs* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1987), p. 91.

<sup>158</sup> Austin, 'Taos', p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> John Marin had come to Taos in 1929 on Luhan's invitation. He spent that summer and the following summer at the art colony experimenting with artistic departures from the watercolours that had brought him substantial success. Marin explored the region by driving around, capturing the landscapes and quality of light on canvas. Sharyn Rohlfen Udall, *Modernist Painting in New Mexico, 1913-1935* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1984), pp. 125-27.



church, its decorative façade encapsulates many traditional features of Spanish-Catholic colonization, none of which are evident from colonists' chosen point of view (figure 7; p. 216). Adams extends this repudiation of context by figuratively removing the church from its location: Ranchos de Taos is, in fact, seven miles away from Taos Pueblo. Through his choice to depict the back of the church, Adams 'Indianizes' the structure while its inclusion in *Taos Pueblo* denies the church's religious and cultural affiliation. Modernist form ultimately supersedes the living cultures depicted in colonist renderings of Ranchos Church, distancing the viewer from the everyday life of Taos' inhabitants and separating artistic object from living subject. As Worden explains, *Taos Pueblo* reflects a 'conceptualization of culture as both experience and object': Adams 'takes his subjects and crystallizes them into art objects'.<sup>161</sup>

Attention to the shapes and lines of the pueblo landscape extends to photographs like *South House, Woman Winnowing Grain* (figure 8; p. 217) which includes a member of the pueblo. Although this is another photograph dominated by the geometric shapes of buildings and shadows, it is also the only example of human interaction with landscape included in the book. Adams shows a normal daily task occurring amongst the pueblo homes. Yet, actually, this sense of capturing a moment in the everyday life of this woman, her village and her culture is subverted through the photograph's careful composition. The woman appears to be appended to the side of the photograph, detached from the buildings by the stark sunlight which illuminates her against the adobe's stark shadow. Further, the woman is made anonymous: her face hidden by her arm holding the pot of grain. Viewers are dissuaded from empathizing with this woman. By anonymizing her, Adams emphasizes his focus on the photograph's formal qualities. On the other hand, however, these choices of representation serve to maintain a courteous distance between prying viewers and pueblo inhabitants. In his discussion of *Taos Pueblo* Padgett asserts that Adams depicts surfaces and the inscrutable exterior of community buildings so as to avoid intrusion and thus acknowledge Taos

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<sup>161</sup> Worden, p. 75, p. 84.

Pueblo's resistance to Anglo curiosity.<sup>162</sup> Native American tribes were becoming ever more averse to the presence of Anglo artists during this period, determining the extent to which these visitors could engage and observe the everyday lives of their communities and increasingly restricting access to places which would divulge esoteric knowledge.<sup>163</sup> Worden reinforces this argument but draws a different conclusion, arguing that Adams' formalist choices reinforce Austin's characterization of the pueblo as a 'glassy fourth dimension', a remark echoing Catherine Lavender's metaphor of the bordered and partial window through which art-colonists viewed local populations.<sup>164</sup> By emphasising its supposed inscrutability and intuitiveness, Adams' photographs distance the viewer from the real lives of his artistic subjects whilst drawing attention to his burgeoning modernist aesthetic: anonymizing people in order to highlight the persistence and stability of the pueblo's distinctive architecture. This is again reinforced in Austin's prose, which echoes Adams' characterization of the landscape in her descriptions of pueblo tribal rituals and calendar rites. In one section Austin's fear of assimilation and vanishing Native American culture are barely concealed behind the cautionary tale of a pueblo member 'converted' to Anglo-American culture and his eventual return to the tribal community:

The Radical stood out for a time. His neighbors cold-shouldered him, [...] his wife wept in the night. When she came to the washing place by the creek, the other women gathered their bundles and moved away. But it was none of these things which finally restored him to conformity; it was his own weakening before the condition of being outcasted from the service of the *acequia madre*, from the community of loving service to the sacred water. [...] There is a dance for each separate wonder of growth, as well as for the wonder of cloud and rain, a dance for the harvest [... That is] the Indianness of these ceremonials.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Padget, 'Native Americans, the Photobook and the Southwest', p. 36.

<sup>163</sup> Peter M. Whiteley, *Rethinking Hopi Ethnography* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), p. 167.

<sup>164</sup> Worden, p. 74; Austin 'Taos', p. 6; Lavender, p. 1.

<sup>165</sup> Austin, 'Taos', pp. 9-10.

Austin gives the impression of an anonymous, almost repressive sense of communality, highlighting a lack – suppression, even – of individuality. Her use of ‘conformity’ seems to be without acknowledgement of the word’s negative connotations while ‘Indianness’ is similarly employed without an awareness of such a word’s ability to reduce diversity to a single fetishized idea of Native American culture.

Even when Adams focuses on an individual member of the pueblo, his choices of representation create distance and detachment between subject and viewer. In *A Man of Taos* (figure 9; p. 217) we are presented with a tightly cropped close up of a Native American man wrapped in a traditional *serape*. A low angle is employed to present the subject as proud and dignified. The sharp diagonal lines created by the folds of the wrap draw the viewer’s eye upwards, an effect emphasized by the *serape*’s dark colour which creates a stark contrast with the man’s wizened face. The sense of texture which is created emphasizes Adams’ talent in the photographic process and the medium’s ability to capture minute detail. However, the use of light and camera angle shrouds the man’s face in shadows. Although he appears to look directly at the camera, his eyes are not visible, rendering Adams’ sitter anonymous. Other aspects of this man’s life are consciously excluded: his daily routine, his attire, the rest of his body, even his name. Adams’ choice of an anonymous title reinforces this denial of individuality and essentializes the sitter. Yet, this ‘Man of Taos’ is actually Tony Lujan.<sup>166</sup> As a close acquaintance, Adams could have acknowledged him by name, yet he chooses not to present Tony Lujan as his friend or as his contact between the art colony and the pueblo. Adams’ manipulation and appropriation of Pueblo culture is further reinforced by this photograph’s staginess. The photograph was actually taken in Adams’ San Francisco studio when he and Luhan visited in 1930.<sup>167</sup> Through a variety of photographic practices Adams appropriates and manipulates his Native American sitter, removing him from his social context to focus on technical choices. By removing unnecessary elements to highlight features of

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<sup>166</sup> Alinder, *Ansel Adams: A Biography*, p. 72.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

texture, light and shape, Adams' replicates stereotypical images of Native Americans as 'noble savages' and a 'vanishing race'.

This problematic representation of a vanished race was, of course, the prevailing nineteenth-century mode for photographing Native Americans.<sup>168</sup> The staged quality of Adams' portrait, physically removing Tony Lujan from the pueblo, as well as the suggestion of typicality in the photograph's title, recalls the popular nineteenth- and early twentieth-century portraits of Edward Curtis. Padget notes that biographers and critics have heretofore ignored similarities between Adams' and Curtis' depictions of Native Americans but, I argue, there is much to suggest an influence or inheritance of Curtis' work in *Taos Pueblo*.<sup>169</sup> Curtis gained widespread popularity and recognition for his portraits and re-enactments of Native American ceremonies which were collated into a twenty volume set entitled *The North American Indian*. Curtis' posed photographs were, in some respects, born of necessity: 'As the Indians were confined to reservations, [he] re-created their life as he imagined it might have been'.<sup>170</sup> But their staginess was also the result of Curtis' view of Native Americans as a vanishing race. As he outlined in the third volume of his extensive compilation, 'In gathering the lore of the Indians of the Plains one hears only of yesterday. His thoughts are of the past; today is but living death, and his very being is permeated with the hopelessness of tomorrow'.<sup>171</sup> As Weber suggests, depictions of Native Americans in the early decades of the twentieth century were often manipulated to perpetuate artists' 'own and societal stereotypes of the "noble savage" and the "vanishing race"'.<sup>172</sup> Both of these stereotypes are clear in an example of Curtis' portraiture: the tellingly-titled *Typical Apache* (figure 10; p. 218). Curtis' sitter is removed from the context of his culture and community, the folds of backdrop collecting at his

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<sup>168</sup> Christopher M. Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982); Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 207-73.

<sup>169</sup> Padget, 'Native Americans, the Photobook and the Southwest', p. 34.

<sup>170</sup> Weber, *Ansel Adams and the Photographers of the American West*, p. 6.

<sup>171</sup> Edward Curtis, *The Teton Sioux, The Yanktonai, The Assiniboin* (Seattle: E. S. Curtis, 1908), p. xi. Northwestern University Digital Library Collections ebook.

<sup>172</sup> Weber, *Ansel Adams and the Photographers of the American West*, p. 184.

feet serving to further heighten the theatricality of the studio-set scene. The full-length shot allows details of costume and deportment to be presented, giving viewers a sense of a completeness of rendering. The Apache sitter is thus presented as a representative example of Native American culture, one which, as Curtis' histrionic statement attests, will soon vanish.

Laments over Native American cultural decline are reinforced by a number of *Taos Pueblo* photographs which depict empty landscapes. Many of these photographs insinuate human activity by including elements of everyday life but, notably, with Pueblo inhabitants out of sight. Choosing to depict a human activity without any actual human presence is an interesting and revealing choice on the part of the photographer as it specifically draws attention to activities which could, and perhaps *should*, be taking place. *North House (Hlauuma)* (figure 11; p. 218) depicts the homes of Taos inhabitants but with any sense of actual human life notably absent. Almost half of the frame is given to the dusty ground, meaning an abundance of activity remains merely inferred: people climbing the ladders to their homes, children playing in the dust, cooking in the communal oven on the left of the photograph. This image skilfully isolates the mechanics of a community – the systems for sleeping, working, eating – maintaining the simplicity and uncluttered quality of Adams' photographic vision. But this does not detract from the fact that these activities are not present in the picture. Instead of people going about their daily business, the scene presented is more like an abandoned village.

This insinuation of human activity can, of course, be read as a stereotypical depiction of a vanished Native American race. A subsequent photograph, *South House, Harvest* (figure 12; p. 219), serves to heighten the effect of the lack of people by designating a specific element of Taos calendar rites. Announcing a 'Harvest' scene brings expectations of bustling industry, but here there are no people working the fields or carrying crops. From one perspective this fits Adams' agenda, drawing attention to the work that is done instead of the people who complete it, yet it also suggests a lamentation over an extinct people who can no longer carry out this work. The bundles of hay even resemble overgrown weeds beginning to envelop this desolate village reinforcing Sylvia Rodriguez's

argument that 'omission is denial translated to the visual and poetic dimensions'.<sup>173</sup> But Adams' use of omission in *Taos Pueblo* differs from Rodriguez's examples of 'the trash and junk cars left out of the landscape'.<sup>174</sup> Here the people themselves, the village's inhabitants, are excluded.

Through these artistic choices Adams' southwestern work explicates how representations by art-colonists reinforced images of the southwest as timeless both in terms of its eternal beauty and in the literal sense of being removed from the progression of history. The possibility of a subsequent cheap edition of the book, to be published by the Fred Harvey Company, reinforces this notion as it aligns with the railways' romanticised promotion of the region as well as colonists' engagement with the region's commercial opportunities. Adams' experimentation with photography's aesthetic possibilities ultimately (mis)represents Native Americans as a static and often vanished race and Taos Pueblo culture is appropriated to fit the art-colonist's agenda.

Interpretations of Native and Spanish-speaking populations produced by Ansel Adams, Oliver La Farge and Willa Cather certainly implicate the project of the art colony with contemporary racist attitudes. At the same time, we can see these art-colonists shifting across genre and experimenting with a mix of approaches in their exploration of how to penetrate and communicate cultural difference. Colonists attempted to ascertain the most useful method for engaging with Native American and Spanish-speaking populations through formal innovation. Questions about how to connect to Native and Spanish-speaking peoples can usefully be approached in relation to the mode of engagements between colonists that I have already discussed. The combination of research and imagination exhibited by La Farge, Adams and Cather reflects the atmosphere of the art colony as a place to improvise, and extends our understanding of these places as a network of meanings and connections.

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<sup>173</sup> Rodriguez, 'Art, Tourism, and Race Relations in Taos', p. 93.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

It is interesting to observe participants in a kind of group characterized by its range of artistic participants and collaborative activities, all approaching the understanding and representation of cultural difference through a combination of empirical evidence and poetic imagination. Building on opportunities to continually move into and out of the colony milieu, La Farge, Cather and Adams controlled their proximity to and managed their sense of connectedness to local cultures. At the same time, Native Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanos exhibited similar agency by managing their level of connectedness to Anglo visitors and controlling the interactions which occurred between them. Native American and Hispanic ways of life, as colonists interpreted them, became positive and negative models for the alternative model of community established between colony participants, the meaningful life they sought in the southwest and the conditions necessary for them to flourish as artists. In this way, representations of cultural difference are revealing of cultural relations between art-colonists and non-Anglo cultures at the same time as they highlight facets of the colony itself, highlighting the tension between idealistic aspirations and the impulse to appropriation. By questioning and examining the most appropriate and accurate way to portray cultural difference, these colonists elucidate aspects of the colony's experimental and aesthetically progressive milieu but align themselves with contemporary racist notions of preservationism and natural decline.

**Figure 2:** Ansel Adams, *North House, Kiva Poles and Thunder Clouds*, 1929, gelatin silver print

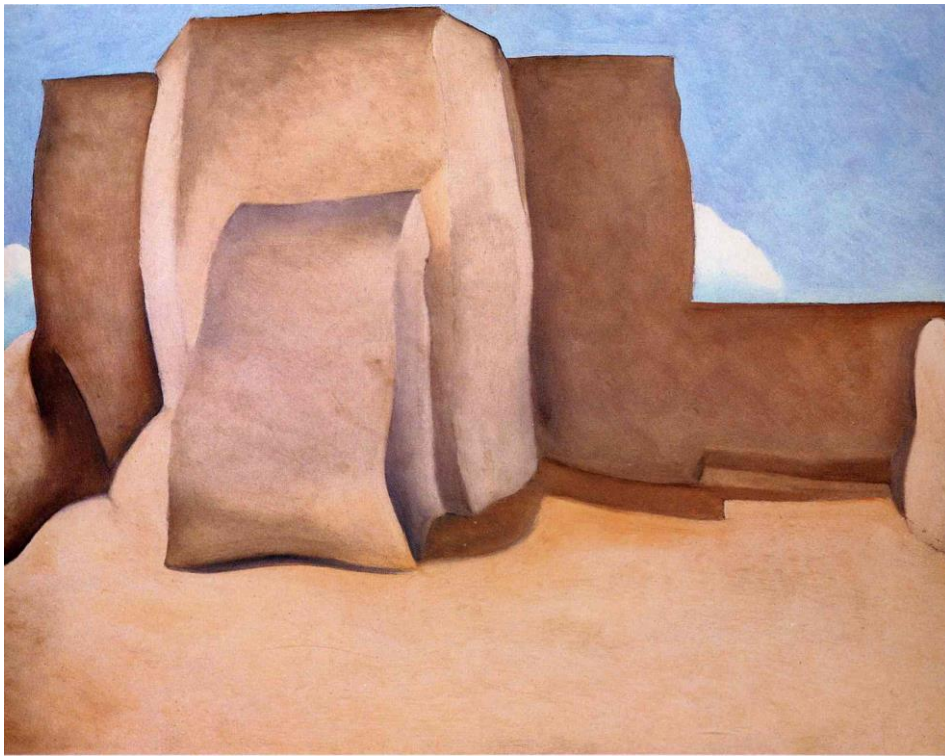


**Figure 3:** Ansel Adams, *St. Francis Church, Ranchos de Taos*, 1929, gelatin silver print





**Figure 4:** Georgia O'Keeffe, *Ranchos Church, New Mexico*, 1930, oil on canvas



**Figure 5:** John Marin, *Back of Ranchos Church*, 1930, watercolour on paper



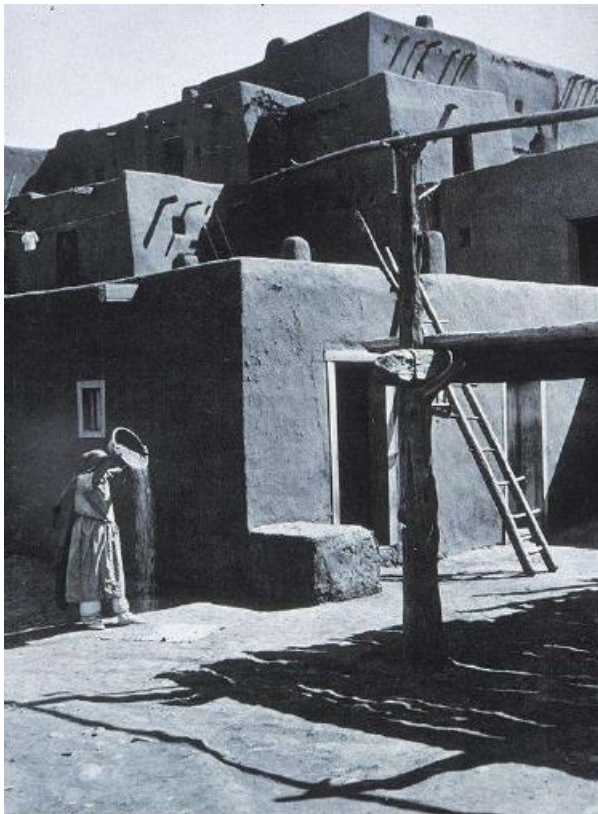
**Figure 6:** Paul Strand, *St Francis Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico*, 1931, palladium print



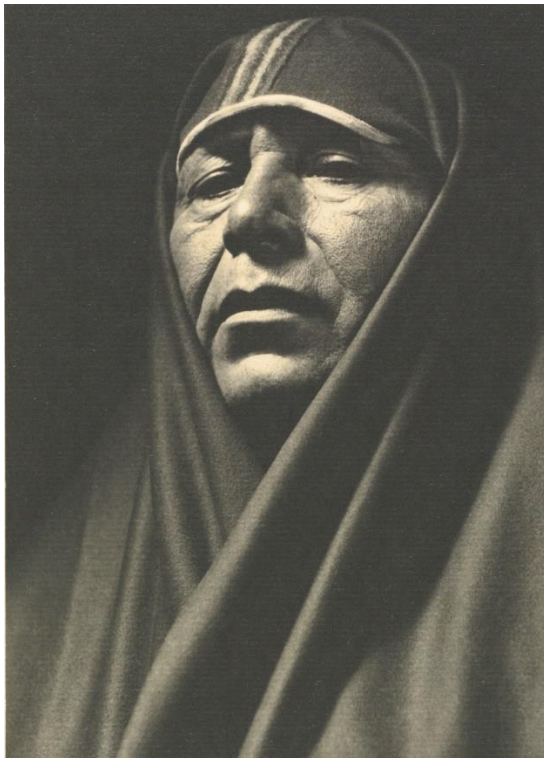
**Figure 7:** The Spanish-Catholic façade of Ranchos Church, author's own photograph



**Figure 8:** Ansel Adams, *South House, Woman Winnowing Grain*, 1929, gelatin silver print

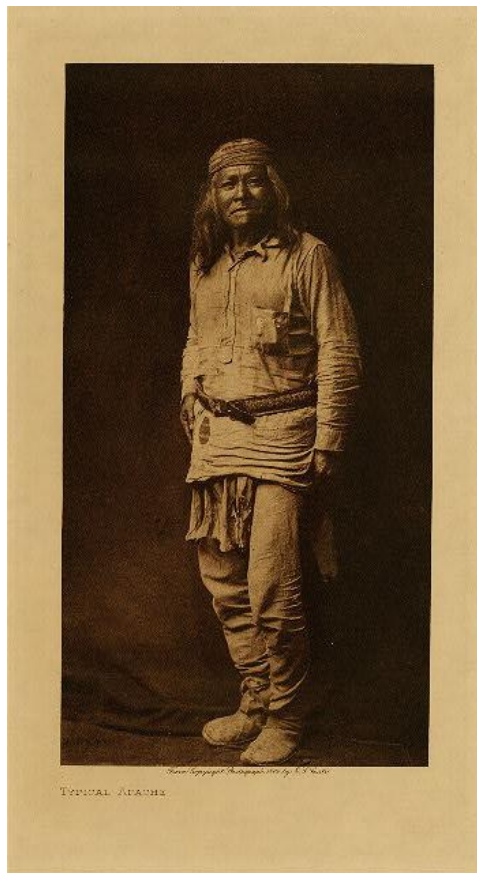


**Figure 9:** Ansel Adams, *A Man of Taos*, 1929, gelatin silver print

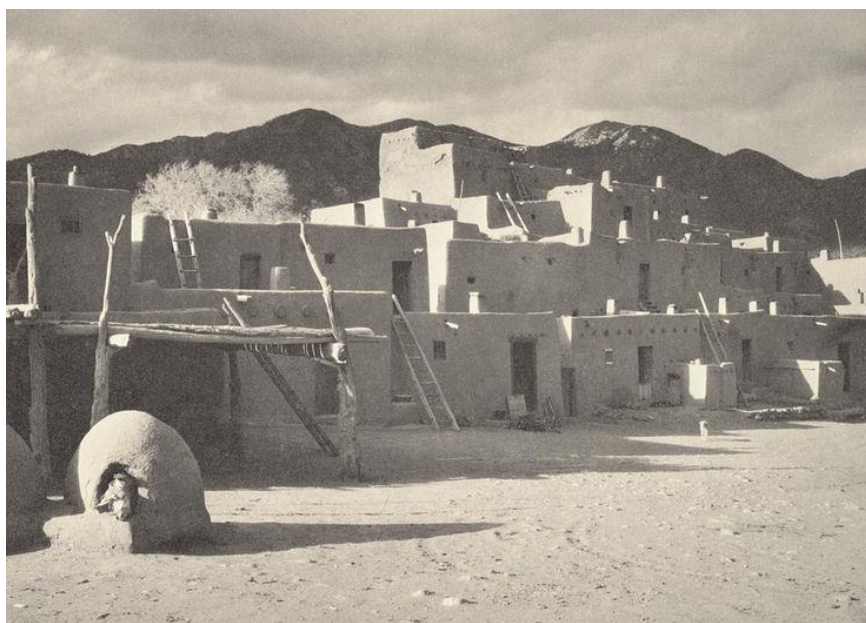




**Figure 10:** Edward Curtis, *Typical Apache*, 1906, photogravure



**Figure 11:** Ansel Adams, *North House (Hlauuma)*, 1929, gelatin silver print



**Figure 12:** Ansel Adams, *South House, Harvest*, 1929, gelatin silver print



## **Chapter Four:**

### **Marriage and its discontents at the Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos art colonies**

This thesis has so far examined two aspects of the western art colony relating to conceptions of autonomy and connectedness: firstly, art-colonists controlled their connection to the colony community while, secondly, their engagements with Native and Spanish-speaking peoples exhibited a tension between attraction and separation. I now move to focus on how this approach to relationships also informed gender politics at these colonies by focusing on relationships between men and women. I have argued that the western art colony provided an opportunity to do things differently: it was a space to engage with people in different ways and thus to explore and rethink behavioural norms and the conventions of marriage. In this chapter I examine how the improvisatory character of this milieu allowed artists scope to experiment with relations of intimacy.

Although there is some discussion of Anglo-Native interactions in this chapter, notably the adoption of 'Indianness' by Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan, my critical approach is differentiated from that of Chapter Three. Whereas the preceding chapter focused on colonists' interpretations of aspects of cultural difference as wholly discrete 'other' ways of life, in this chapter I explore how some female art-colonists were personally drawn to the 'high status and [...] power' they perceived women to enjoy in Native American cultures, adopting aspects of 'Indianness' in a bid to embody a status and power they felt unable to possess as Anglo-American women.<sup>1</sup> This physical demonstration of the kinds of women they wanted to be represents the counterpart of male colonists engaging in 'traditional' hypermasculine activities at these colonies. Indeed, by illuminating similar gender experiments being conducted by male colonists as well as female colonists, this chapter contributes a greater critical intensity to the study of male experiences than they have heretofore been afforded. In so doing, I augment a fascinating field of literature re-examining female

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret D. Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879-1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 2.

experiences of the west and southwest whilst at the same time reinforcing the shared practices exhibited among art-colonists that are not delineated by gender.

In a 1937 article for the *New Mexico Sentinel*, novelist and Santa Fe colonist Raymond Otis proclaimed the colony to be a 'play place':

The lure of sociability in Santa Fe is a dangerous thing. One's friends are close at hand; associations are frequent and intimate, for there are relatively few distractions. This is a threat to the creative life. [...] Everybody has more or less genius for sociability. A person attempting serious work in Santa Fe must guard against his genius for friendship. [...] That is the great disadvantage of attempting to make Santa Fe one's work-place. It is a play-place.<sup>2</sup>

Although Otis uses the term 'play' in opposition to work, in many ways play aided colonists' experiences and influenced their work. By labelling it a 'play-place' Otis denigrates the colony milieu as a place where things are not taken seriously and where people merely fooled around. But this categorization is not as entirely negative in its implications as Otis declares. Colonists could play around with ideas and play with different levels of engagement. Fooling around enabled their negotiation of interpersonal dynamics and their rethinking of behavioural norms. Labelling the colony a 'play-place' thus becomes more than mere disparagement of sociability hindering work and instead aligns with the kind of definition of play outlined by performance theorist Richard Schechner:

[In daily life play is used for] refreshment, energy, unusual ways of turning things around, insights, breaks, openings and, especially, *looseness*. This looseness (pliability, bending, lability, unfocused attention, the long way around) is implied in such phrases as 'play it out'

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond Otis, 'Plight in Santa Fe', *The New Mexico Sentinel*, 17 November 1937, quoted in Weigle and Fiore, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 138. Other colonists would, however, affirm the advantages of these 'associations': those involved in The Rabble or Writers' Editions, for instance. This is clearly not the case for Otis, but the ability to control and limit engagement with other colonists is nevertheless emphasized through Otis' choice to stay in this environment and in the success he found with works produced in Santa Fe. Otis' opinion is validated by the colony's accommodation of a range of engagements.

or 'there's play in the rope' or 'play around with that idea'. Looseness encourages the discovery of new configurations and twists of ideas and experiences.<sup>3</sup>

Art colonies in the west embodied this 'looseness' in the network of temporary association they offered, and art-colonists had the opportunity to 'play around with' ways to interact with each other. In particular, engaging with this sense of play as looseness enabled colonists to review a socially entrenched relationship such as marriage without rejecting it completely. There was no experimental or adventurous denunciation of such institutions; most colonists were and remained married, but sought to find more satisfying male-female relationships.<sup>4</sup>

In essence, colonists engaged with the practices of marriage but sought to alter them, utilizing the art colony's informality to reconcile a sense of connectedness to a spouse with the kinds of men and women they wanted to be.<sup>5</sup> Poet, novelist and Taos colonist Jean Toomer declared that 'Here is the possibility of a new people. Men and women in spirit to match the grandeur of this earth'.<sup>6</sup> Dismantling his concept of 'a new people' into 'men and women' Toomer broaches the possibilities for both sexes in western art colonies. Colonist experiments occurred during a time

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that there were examples of same-sex intimate relationships at the western art colony but I have chosen to focus solely on heterosexual relationships in this chapter because it was marriage that prompted so many colonists to experiment with their behaviour and explore possibilities of change in their work. The concept of marriage between a man and a woman carried a wealth of historically constructed expectations and limitations. Yet retreat to the colony milieu provided a similarly improvisatory atmosphere for different artists exploring different types of intimate relationships. For heterosexual and homosexual art-colonists the impetus was the same: to utilize the art colony's informality to explore the kinds of men and women they wanted to be. But heterosexual art-colonists augmented these explorations with a negotiation of the way conventional marriage was supposed to operate. For a discussion of Spud Johnson's homosexuality see Flannery Burke, 'Spud Johnson and a Gay Man's Place in the Taos Creative Arts Community', *Pacific Historical Review*, 79 (2010), 86-113. Their relationship is also broached in Sharyn Rohlfen Udall, *Spud Johnson and Laughing Horse* (Santa Fe: Sunstone, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> As outlined in Chapter One, an art-colonist is defined by the production of art representing or influenced by the colony milieu or southwestern landscape. Following this criteria for definition some spouses or partners of art-colonists discussed in this chapter are not referred to as art-colonists themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 29. Toomer was a prominent member of the Harlem Renaissance who had found wide acclaim with his 1923 novel *Cane*. His time in New Mexico is often ignored by his biographers but he first came to Taos on Luhan's invitation. He visited the art colony sporadically between 1925 and 1937, producing a play, *A Drama of the Southwest*, and various essays about the southwest which all went unpublished but survive in his archive. During this period Toomer also spent time at the Carmel art colony. He and wife Margery Latimer lived in Carmel in 1932 and it became the fictionalized in Toomer's autobiographical but unpublished novel *Caromb*.



when historically-constructed meanings of gender were being navigated and challenged.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, the colony was used to work through anxieties predicated on and rooted in mainstream Anglo-American cultural constraints on the individual, anxieties which were heightened by their quest for the most productive situation in which to produce art. Although these are behavioural experiments like those explored in Chapters Two and Three, these experiences engage with a different and markedly wider cultural context.

Particularly pertinent to the discussion here is the contemporary model of the respectable man who eschewed 'the pleasures of dissipation' in order to be 'faithful to and solicitous of his wife' and its impact on conventional expectations and ideals of masculinity: 'Men, it was assumed, would outgrow the dissolute masculinity of youth and embrace the respectable masculinity of adulthood'.<sup>8</sup> This ideal of masculine maturity saw men embrace a sense of dominance within the family which exhibited 'men's capacity to control their circumstances': 'Men acted on the world – and on women' while women, it was traditionally perceived, 'received and reacted passively to these male exertions'.<sup>9</sup> At the same time many social and cultural institutions during this period had a profound effect on ideas of masculinity: the temperance movement, social purity movement, and campaigns against animal fighting and hunting all 'restricted a certain variety of masculine exuberance and problematized its homosocial bonding'.<sup>10</sup> In response, group sport, bodybuilding and physical culture were widely extolled in an effort for men to 'invest their bodies with the appearance of power and an aura of manliness and health'.<sup>11</sup> As I will show, similar practices were presented by male art-colonists.

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<sup>7</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 169.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 230.

<sup>9</sup> John Starrett Hughes, 'The Madness of Separate Spheres: Insanity and Masculinity in Victorian Alabama', in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. by Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 53-66 (p. 58).

<sup>10</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 85. See also Carnes and Griffen, eds, *Meanings for Manhood* and John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Colin R. Jackson, 'Camp Life: The Queer History of "Manhood" in the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-37', *American Studies* 48 (2007), pp. 19-36 (p. 20).

Meanwhile, contemporary studies examined women's reception of 'male exertions' in terms of the role of sex within marriage, concluding that a wife's sexual desires were dependent on those of her husband; relinquishing sexual subjectivity, she is led by his libido and sexual behaviour.<sup>12</sup> Contesting this established standard of passive womanhood was often interpreted as sexual deviance in an age where the popularity of Sigmund Freud's sexual discourse had given rise to 'wholly sexualised, eroticised female malad[ies]' like hysteria and hypersexuality.<sup>13</sup> This view of women extended beyond the bedroom as passivity and restraint were perceived to characterize feminine behaviour generally. Denied sexual autonomy, women seemed not to require autonomy in many other areas too. These dictates resulted in many women withdrawing from men entirely while others strove to create new models of heterosexual interaction.<sup>14</sup>

Western art colonies deserve to be recovered as important but previously unexplored examples of experiments with gendered behaviour (including within marriage) during this period. Certainly, we can see male and female art-colonists engaging with changing ideas of femininity and masculinity, negotiating shifting power relationships between men and women and attempting to rethink marital practices to accommodate these notions. In Carmel, poet George Sterling and novelist Jack London sought to play out their idea of a hypermasculine ideal and to reconcile this with the conventions of marriage. Crucially, they were engaging with these ideas in a markedly fraternal environment. Sterling provided the centripetal force in Carmel, often referred to as 'the lord of the region' or 'the high panjandrum' of the art colony.<sup>15</sup> Along with Sterling and London the main players at this art colony included novelist James Hopper, photographer Arnold Genthe and poet Harry Lafler: a markedly male cohort.<sup>16</sup> The strong personalities of Carmel's male colonists

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<sup>12</sup> The pioneering sex surveys conducted by Katharine B. Davis and Dr Clelia Mosher are discussed in D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, pp. 175-78. Davis in particular found this to be prevalent amongst married women.

<sup>13</sup> Both complaints are discussed extensively and interpreted astutely by Lunbeck.

<sup>14</sup> Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion*, p. 230.

<sup>15</sup> Goodman and Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West*, p. 205.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Lafler, literary editor of the *Argonaut*, moved to Carmel after the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. He later moved to a house further down the coast but continued to visit and socialize in Carmel, often

resulted in an emphasis on physical exertions associated with manliness: be it swimming in the bay or extramarital affairs.<sup>17</sup> Amongst male peers, colonists like London explored the physical demonstration of masculinity, presenting an image of fierce male individualism in his life and his literature. In his 1913 novel *The Valley of the Moon* London reflects on his time spent in Carmel by fictionalizing the art colony. Thinly-veiled versions of fellow art-colonists emphasizes London's hypermasculine ideal and his belief in its compatibility with the ideals of marriage: explorations which were pursued in the art colony milieu.

As the notable exception to Carmel's core group of male colonists, Austin's experience of the western art colony led to her conclusion that a woman could not be both an artist and a wife. To Carmel's male contingent Austin was an impressive artist but her failure to match up to conventional ideas of femininity was problematic. Austin's reaction, after her move to the art colony in Santa Fe, was to reject systems that restricted her by setting sexual activity to one side. Her experiences as one of the first artists to settle in Carmel and her subsequent relocation to Santa Fe highlight how Carmel's distinctly male-orientated space failed to provide her with conditions enabling her to reconcile her needs as an artist with the social expectations of femininity. The less masculinized milieu of New Mexican art colonies, conversely, was more hospitable to improvisations in women's behaviour and provided Austin and others with opportunities to affiliate with an 'Indian' femininity.<sup>18</sup>

The diaries and fiction of Harvey Fergusson show him attempting to rethink the expectations of marriage to accommodate progressive ideas of femininity, as well as to achieve the style of masculinity to which he aspired. Fergusson's engagement with the way conventional marriage was supposed to operate is evident both in his experiences in the art colonies, particularly the summer

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accompanying poet Nora May French, with whom he was having an affair, until her suicide at Sterling's Carmel home in 1907. Dramov, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, pp. 136-43.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of exhibiting specific behaviours and engaging in activities understood to be 'masculine' see Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, particularly 'Playing for Keeps: Masculinity as Recreation and the Re-Creation of Masculinity', pp. 80-104.

<sup>18</sup> I employ the terms 'Indian' and 'Indianness' here to distinguish between the real experiences and culture of southwestern indigenous populations and Anglo-American perceptions of Native American practices.

he spent in Santa Fe and Taos with his future wife Rebecca McCann in 1924, and in the 1927 novel *Wolf Song* which fictionalized elements of these experiences. An analysis of both reveals that Fergusson achieved a new kind of understanding of marriage but remained deeply ambivalent about this version of male-female relationships.

In these New Mexican art colonies successful women were producing popular or progressive art. They were central to the social milieu of the colony. While Austin produced some of the region's most celebrated literature during this period, Luhan's adobe estate in nearby Taos was the hub of the art colony. Luhan played host to a diverse range of the era's movers and shakers, just as she had at her Florentine villa and Greenwich Village apartment. Her marriage to Tony Lujan represented the culmination of her search for a more satisfying marital relationship and a more satisfying femininity. Her marriage to a Native American is pivotal to her reconciliation with the conventions of marriage, providing Luhan (like Austin) with a means to elude restrictive Anglo-American ideas of femininity by donning Native American dress and engaging in traditional 'Indian' practices.

The adoption of 'Indianness' by female art-colonists like Austin and Luhan illustrates the particular difficulty involved in challenging ideas of femininity during this period. Their engagement with contemporary sexual politics through the performance of 'Indianness' suggests a struggle to find room beyond the limits of traditional femininity, an endeavour which led them to experiment with the appropriation of 'otherness' to counter and reshape socially-prescribed gendered behaviour. Their approach was to use aspects of an 'Indian' sign system as a means to escape the fixed meanings of 'male' and 'female' sign systems.<sup>19</sup> These engagements with Native American

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<sup>19</sup> We have become familiar with these themes through the work of Judith Butler and her argument that notions of masculinity and femininity need to be understood as imitative roles exhibited within socially-constructed frameworks of 'appropriate' behaviour. Her view that 'identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes' is an important foundation for my investigations in this chapter, particularly her 1990 article 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' since my focus on patterns of behaviour places the mimesis and negotiation of historically constructed ideas of femininity and masculinity at the centre of my discussion. The article also builds on many of the central themes of Butler's seminal study *Gender Trouble* by questioning the stability and value of identity categories. The performative practices and gendered behaviour exhibited by art-colonists highlight Butler's argument about the constructedness of all gender roles as 'surface sign[s]' since 'gender is performance that [...] produces on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation)'. However, what I want to argue is that art colonies provided an alternative space for a self-conscious form of play, which is distinct from Butler's idea of 'deep-

culture are undeniably problematic in terms of their restricted sense of Native women's lives, and their assumptions about 'Indian' identity. Acknowledging the troubling nature of this adoption, here I look at its liberatory role for Luhan and Austin. Where the interactions between Anglo- and non-Anglo Americans in New Mexico that I discussed in Chapter Three were predicated on a preservationist ethic and the sense that aspects of other cultures could be used as positive and negative models for the style of living cultivated at the art colony, here, looking through the lens of gender politics, I explore female colonists' engagement with Native American culture as a means to separate themselves from Anglo-American culture rather than as a way to incorporate aspects of Native American culture. In the previous chapter we saw how colonists grappled with communicating the sense of absolute difference they perceived in these ways of life by producing experimental and progressive art which combined both scientific observation and poetic imagination. Although both sets of examples are similarly appropriative, here the emphasis is on how the art colony milieu and the appropriation of 'Indianness' provided an alternative environment to play out different versions of femininity without stigma.<sup>20</sup>

The figures discussed in this chapter were all acutely aware of the ways in which their behaviour could be interpreted: they wanted to present themselves as 'proper' men and

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seated [...] psychically entrenched play'. As behaviours presented rather than performed, I follow distinctions of definition articulated by Judith Butler: 'Gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is performative in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express'. These artists were not consciously playing a role for an audience but they were aware of and utilized the art colony's informality in order to play with the rigid script of male and female behaviour. The physical demonstration of hypermasculine and 'Indian' behaviours were performative practices enacted in a space recognised as removed from the expectations of their everyday lives. Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halpenn (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 307-20.

<sup>20</sup> Luhan and Austin both utilized the western art colony's proximity to Native American cultures to participate in contemporary sexual politics in which women objected to the 'narrow construction of respectability that rigidly separated good from bad women'. Although neither Luhan's nor Austin's behaviour is definable within prevalent contemporary psychological categories their art-colony experiences evoke a similar revolt against historically constructed ideas of femininity. Austin echoes the common reaction of hysterical women to 'withdraw from heterosexuality altogether' while Luhan's refusal to relinquish her sexual subjectivity would have been open to diagnosis as a 'hypersexual female': a 'wilfully passionate woman who could not control her desire for sexual pleasure'. Their appropriation of Native American practices was primarily a means to negotiate this binary framework and present new versions of femininity. Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion*, pp. 185-210.

‘alternative’ women. They were exploring aspirations to be different while, in many cases, maintaining a sense of connectedness to a spouse. Be it brief sexual liaisons or the imitation of Native American rituals, these were heightened sensations: behaviours which appealed to the senses and evoked an emotional response. Colonists utilized the looseness of the colony milieu to enact heightened sensations.<sup>21</sup> This feeling of accessing sensation in the southwest is perhaps most clearly articulated by female art-colonists, many of whom express a sense of particular emancipation from the rules of the city. In these they add to flourishing contemporary conversations about femininity and, perhaps in response to this cultural shift, male colonists are keen to assert a traditional sense of masculinity. Commenting on Georgia O’Keeffe’s first trip to Taos, for instance, her travel companion Rebecca Strand declared: ‘Georgia [...] certainly belongs to this world and so many of the things she gets into in New York have dropped away out here as they are not really part of her real self’.<sup>22</sup> The repetition of ‘real’ connotes the artificiality of the city, an environment from which these women have removed themselves in order to find something ‘real’ in the southwest. Similarly, when Dorothy Brett first visited Taos with D. H. and Frieda Lawrence she exclaimed ‘How *real* it all is’.<sup>23</sup> Brett’s response to the New Mexican landscape reinforces Strand’s sentiments and the common categorization of the American urban environment as ‘curiously unreal’ during this era.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in many ways, this chapter is differentiated from previous chapters in that it simultaneously increases the thesis’ focus on interpersonal relationships by zooming in on the smallest-scale relationships between colonists and their partners as well as expanding previous chapters’ focus on contemporary sociological aspects by zooming out to illustrate colonists’ responses to mainstream cultural expectations and restraints on gender.

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<sup>21</sup> The observable quality of visual signifiers like behaviour and clothing emphasizes the connection between play and *display*, reinforcing the importance of play at these art colonies by indicating the word’s performative connotations. I use the term gender *roles* quite consciously in this discussion to engage with the performative quality of these behaviours. As Schechner succinctly asserts, ‘What is performance? Behaviour heightened’. Schechner, *The Future of Ritual*, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson, *Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life*, p. 331.

<sup>23</sup> Brett, *Lawrence and Brett*, p. 52.

<sup>24</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, p. 5.

## Jack London and George Sterling in Carmel

Carmel provided George Sterling and Jack London with opportunities for heightened experiences, activities which elicited an intense emotional response, which in turn allowed them to play out a sense of themselves as hypermasculine. It was also a place in which both writers could attempt to negotiate this idea of their masculinity with the expectations of marriage. Focusing on the experiences of these two prominent Carmel colonists highlights how artists could utilize the colony milieu to modify the ideals of marriage as well as illustrating how Carmel's distinctly fraternal atmosphere influenced these negotiations. The preponderance of dominant male personalities here influenced how male colonists played out the kinds of men they wanted to be and resulted in a promotion of hypermasculinity. Men's desires were foregrounded, but while prioritizing the experiences and opinions of men was obviously self-serving, the opportunities for exploration afforded by the colony milieu were real. I am not attempting to present these colonies as idealized places. Colonists attempted to do things differently in the pursuit of personal development: they did what they believed was best for them. In the case of Sterling and London in Carmel, what was best for them was not to reject marriage altogether but to adjust it to satisfy their own beliefs and behaviours. The significance of the experiences of these two colonists, particularly with regard to their close friendship, is evidenced in London's close representation of colony life in his 1913 novel *The Valley of the Moon*.<sup>25</sup>

Carmel offered both Sterling and London the opportunity to escape the confines of marriage altogether. Sterling's infidelity was one of the reasons leading to his move to the art colony. His wife Carrie had threatened to leave when she discovered an apartment her husband had rented solely to

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<sup>25</sup> Sterling even claimed to have known London 'better than his own wife knew him'. Letter Sterling to H. L. Mencken, 30 April 1918, in *From Bohemia to Baltimore: The Letters of H. L. Mencken and George Sterling*, ed. by S. Joshi (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2001), p. 32. Google ebook.

conduct his illicit liaisons.<sup>26</sup> But instead of allowing events to take this direction, Sterling proposed a move to Carmel to work on the marriage, aiming to commit himself to 'just one girl'.<sup>27</sup> London had similarly strayed from the sexual restrictions of marriage, complaining that his first wife was 'devoted to purity': 'When I tell her morality is only evidence of low blood pressure, she hates me. [...] Every time I come back after being away from home for a night she won't let me be in the same room with her'.<sup>28</sup> Yet he, like Sterling, did not take up the opportunity to be rid of these restrictions, marrying Charmian Kittredge the day after his divorce from his first wife was finalized.<sup>29</sup> These actions and opinions attest to both colonists' belief in the value of marriage and their desire to be married. Removed from the city to the more improvisatory space of the art colony, London and Sterling both attempted to formulate a kind of marriage which they found more satisfying.

This need for revision was born of a tension between sexual commitment and a fierce individualism.<sup>30</sup> London even chose to call his wives 'mate' since this was 'less suggestive of a legal tie that would bind him to the home' and brought marriage closer to a system of individual instinct.<sup>31</sup> This ambivalence about leaving the home finds imaginative expression throughout his literary oeuvre. In the title tale of his first short story collection *The Son of the Wolf*, London declares that 'man rarely places a proper valuation upon his womankind [...] until deprived of them'.<sup>32</sup> This collection established the wolf or wolf-like man as the avatar of London's sense of the individualistic

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<sup>26</sup> Benediktsson, *George Sterling*, pp. 24-30.

<sup>27</sup> Sterling to Ambrose Bierce, quoted in Harold Giliam and Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1992), p. 89.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Noel, *Footloose in Arcadia: A Personal Record of Jack London, George Sterling, Ambrose Bierce* (New York: Carrick & Evans, 1940), p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> London married his first wife, Bessie Maddern, in 1900. However, the strain on their marriage was evident despite the birth of their two daughters and they divorced in 1905. His second marriage, to Charmian Kittredge, lasted until his death in 1916. Charmian regularly accompanied her husband on visits to the Carmel art colony. Sam S. Baskett, 'Sea Change in *The Sea-Wolf*', in *Rereading Jack London*, ed. by Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 92-109 (pp. 94-96).

<sup>30</sup> Arduous days of manual labour had instilled the creative benefits of travel and strenuous activity into London from a young age. Working at a cannery at the age of thirteen and later joining the crew of a sealing schooner, London subsequently headed to the Far North to join the Klondike Gold Rush, all of which greatly informed his fiction. Alex Kershaw, *Jack London: A Life* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Newspaper clipping fragment regarding Jack London's daughter, Joan, and her second divorce from Charles Malamuth, 1 June 1930, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Jack London Papers, Box 2.

<sup>32</sup> Jack London, 'The Son of the Wolf', in *Tales of the Far North* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1900), pp. 21-51 (p. 22).



male. His lupine characters embody travel and adventure as well as a primal brutality, but they also give imaginative expression to his hope for reconciliation between this sense of masculinity and the expectations of marriage. The protagonist of London's 1904 novel *The Sea Wolf* Humphrey Van Weyden, for instance, must actually hone physical manifestations of his masculinity after a ship wreck finds him in a predominantly masculine environment under the tutelage of ship captain Wolf Larsen, a man whose 'massive build' appeared 'but the advertisement of a greater strength that lurked within'.<sup>33</sup> As Van Weyden endures the harsh manual labour of the ship he gains muscle mass, a more rugged appearance and, at the culmination of his transformation into this specific masculine role, he gains a wife. Only after this conversion to hypermasculinity is Van Weyden ready and able to marry.

London sought to embody these wolf-like qualities himself and relished the lycanthropic sobriquet bestowed on him by Sterling. London's second wife Charmian recalls that:

George [Sterling] had affectionately dubbed him 'The Wolf', or 'The Fierce Wolf', or 'The Shaggy Wolf'. In the last month of Jack London's life, he gave me an exquisite tiny wristwatch. 'And what shall I have engraved on it?' I asked. 'Oh, "Mate from Wolf", I guess', he replied. [...] 'I have sometimes wished you would call me "Wolf" more often'.<sup>34</sup>

The name, of course, constituted a pronouncement of the kind of man he wanted to be – primal, independent, wild, energetic – qualities which could be reinforced through the physical demonstration of masculinity.<sup>35</sup> Mary Austin offers a similar analysis of Sterling's behaviour:

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<sup>33</sup> Jack London, *The Sea Wolf* (London: Hesperus, 2013), pp. 17-18.

<sup>34</sup> Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London: Volume II* (New York: Century, 1921), p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> This was, perhaps, a response to London's surprisingly un-masculine demeanour, as many colonists noted. Genthe, for instance, reflects that 'there was almost a feminine wistfulness about him. Yet at the same time he gave the feeling of a terrific and unconquerable physical force'. London was keen and, it seems, successful in masking any unmanly qualities with traditionally masculine behaviours. Austin, too, was aware of how London had 'long made a fetish of physical activity' before he arrived in Carmel. When she finally met him at the colony, however, she found that he spoke in a 'surprisingly thin and unmasculine voice'. London's personal anxieties echo broader contemporary concerns, as Deloria asserts, about the male 'character' which was seen to be 'imperilled by an effeminate, postfrontier urbanism'. Although discussing the adoption of 'Indianness' Deloria's argument is equally applicable to this exaggeratedly masculine behaviour, highlighting how a range of strategies were employed to confront social anxieties. At western art colonies it was mainly female colonists who adopted 'Indianness' while men in Carmel demonstrated and asserted a sense of hypermasculinity. Yet both of these patterns of behaviour are grounded in the provision of heightened experiences: imitating Native

Sterling's greatest pleasures were those that whetted his incessant appetite for sensation – the sting of the surf against his body, the dangerous pull of the undertow off the Carmel beaches, or gathering seafood among the 'undulant, apple-green hollows' of Mission Cove. He also delighted in striding, ax [*sic*] on shoulder, over the Monterey Hills looking for pitch pine, or for bee-trees, or whatever arduous and practical simplicity restored him to that human touch, from which it was his weakness to fall away, or perhaps never quite to attain in any other relation.<sup>36</sup>

London shared Sterling's 'incessant appetite for sensation' and is similarly described by friend and writer Upton Sinclair as 'a man of action; he liked to sail a boat [or] to run a ranch'.<sup>37</sup> In Carmel Sterling and London relished the opportunities for physical activities and demonstrations of hypermasculinity which allowed them to play out the kinds of men they wanted to be.

Recalling the experience, London later closely represented the reality of Carmel in *The Valley of the Moon*, a novel which follows the married life of a young Oakland couple in turn-of-the-century California. Disillusioned with city life (after he ends up in jail for fighting and she is left distraught after a miscarriage), Billy Roberts and Saxon Brown strike out into unfamiliar territory in order to find their own 'piece of land [...] to settle down on'.<sup>38</sup> Their journey through central and northern California includes a brief episode amongst a thinly-veiled description of Carmel's male art-colonists and their penchant for physical exertions. The athleticism of the fictionalized Carmel men certainly reflects London and Sterling's penchant for outdoor activities, particularly swimming in the bay

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American practices evoked pleasure through intense sensations in much the same way as the physical activities enjoyed by London and Sterling. Genthe, *As I Remember*, p.74; Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 40; Deloria, p. 96.

<sup>36</sup> Mary Austin, 'George Sterling at Carmel', *American Mercury*, 11 (1927), 65-72 (p. 66).

<sup>37</sup> Reflecting on a challenging yet gratifying relationship, Sinclair declared of London that 'in the flesh [he] was very much of the flesh' often 'with a flask of gin before him, and the stumps of many cigarettes in his dinner-plate, and his eyes red and unwholesome looking'. Through an array of visual signifiers, London presented an image of masculinity wholly antithetical to Sinclair's staunch principles of abstinence. In the wake of London's death in 1916 Sinclair reflected on a friendship characterized by arguments about 'self-discipline versus self-indulgence; or as Jack would have put it in his side of the debate, asceticism versus self-expression. Which way will a man get most out of life?' Letter Upton Sinclair to Sterling, 11 December 1916, George Sterling Papers, Box 1.

<sup>38</sup> London, *The Valley of the Moon*, p. 292. All subsequent references are to this edition.

(figure 1; p. 238). When Billy and Saxon stumble upon the fictionalized version of the art colony at Carmel it is immediately introduced as a domain of physical masculinity:

Down from the dark pines and across the sandhills ran a man, naked save for narrow trunks. He was smooth and rosy-skinned, cherubic-faced, with a thatch of curly yellow hair, but his body was hugely thewed as a Hercules' [... making Saxon think] of the Vikings on the wet sands of England. [...]

'Some swimmer, that boy, some swimmer', [Billy] praised. 'Nothing chicken-hearted about him'.<sup>39</sup>

Billy's reaction recalls London's insistent focus on the physicality of masculinity, echoing a contemporary *Cosmopolitan* article which asserted that 'most terrifying to men was the specter of the sissy [...] flabby, feeble, mawkish [...] chicken-hearted, cold and fearful'.<sup>40</sup> It also highlights how western art colonies were places to play out ideas of gendered behaviour. Carmel's mainly masculine milieu is emphasized through this vivid and even perhaps homoerotic depiction of physical manliness as both Billy and Saxon rely on physical attributes to identify the swimmer as a certain kind of man. The swimmer (who closely resembles Carmel colonist James Hopper) is admired by Billy as sharing an idea of masculinity; they are the same kind of man since there is 'nothing chicken-hearted' about London's prize fighting protagonist either. His wife's comparison to the 'Vikings [...] of England', however, suggests a different endorsement of this kind of man. Invoking the idea of lineage and ancestry, the swimmer becomes the ideal mate to Saxon: an idea further reinforced by her own name. In what the *New York Times* described as 'a man's size book, containing a man's size idea', the physical demonstration of masculinity, particularly in the colony milieu, is fictionalized as essential in the negotiation of successful male-female relationships.<sup>41</sup> Stopping at Carmel on their way to the Valley of the Moon, Billy and Saxon find something different at the colony than in either the city they left behind or their subsequent rural isolation. As both arena to

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<sup>39</sup> London, *The Valley of the Moon*, pp. 371-72.

<sup>40</sup> Rafford Pyke, 'What Men Like in Men', *Cosmopolitan*, 33 (1902), 402-06 (405-06).

<sup>41</sup> Helen Bullis, 'Jack London: His *Valley of the Moon*, a Pioneer Story', *New York Times*, 9 November 1913.

act out a certain kind of masculinity and as a phase in the process of finding marital bliss the art colony milieu is presented as a stage in both senses of the word.

Differentiating the art colony milieu from other arenas of physical masculinity presented in the novel (Billy's boxing matches, for instance) establishes a connection between bodily manliness and the subsequent production of art. It is pertinent, therefore, that this section of the novel is the most overtly autobiographical since, like depictions of the art colony, this too closely reflects reality. London often espoused his belief in the connection between masculinity and aesthetic capability. When London and Charmian visited Carmel in 1910, for instance, a melancholy Sterling asked London to consider publishing Sterling's poems under his own name. Responding to Sterling's request London later wrote to his friend:

You ought to be castrated – writing things [...] and then not wanting to put your name to them. [...] Talk about the gladiator amongst the eunuchs! – You're a gladiator all right; but you go crawling around sideways and byways trying to emasculate yourself all the time.<sup>42</sup>

Peppering his chastisement with the rhetoric of bodily masculinity, London highlights his understanding of the innate connectedness between artistry and physical, particularly sexual, manliness.

London's admonition reinforces a philosophy espoused throughout their friendship. San Francisco journalist Joseph Noel, who circulated with Sterling and London in San Francisco, recalls the pair's first meeting ending in argument and the second in Sterling's embarrassment since on both occasions London had insisted on taking his companions to down-at-heel burlesque houses. Yet soon Sterling became enamoured by the 'frank, free, joyous' behaviours exhibited by his new friend who, it seemed, had set about educating him in the philosophy of sensualism.<sup>43</sup> The increasing

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<sup>42</sup> King Hendricks and Irving Shepard, eds, *Letters from Jack London: Containing an Unpublished Correspondence between London and Sinclair Lewis* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), p. 312.

<sup>43</sup> After conducting a tour of San Francisco's brothels, for instance, London preached to an uneasy Sterling on the merits of casual sex: 'What more [...] may a man want? [...] A feeling of power, a satisfaction of the instinct that inclines us toward beauty, [...] a man may resolve his defeats, forget his limitations, gather spiritual strength to reach for the stars again'. London's enthusiastic exaltation suggests heightened sensations like sex are at the heart of assertions of masculinity. Aiding strength and vigour as well as a sense of recognising

embrace of this ideology altered Sterling's view of marriage. He came to see London as 'a finger post pointing in the opposite direction to denial', adopting the conviction that heightened sensations like sex were crucial to artistic autonomy.<sup>44</sup> Sterling's biographer Thomas Benediktsson corroborates Noel's suggestion that the flowering of his relationship with London led to 'the true crisis in [Sterling's] domestic life': 'By the time [...] the poet was calling Jack Wolf, the genteel tradition [...] was being gradually stripped of its glamour'.<sup>45</sup> The traditional practices of marriage subsequently lose their appeal and, when confronted with the possibility of Carrie leaving him, Sterling decides instead to use the colony milieu to reformulate marriage. His aim is to find room for the heightened experiences he deems as critical to the man he wants to be and the art he wants to create. But where he was able to pursue many of these physical activities at the colony, casual sex was significantly more difficult to reconcile with marital obligations. As Austin reflects, 'we all of us [in Carmel] did know that George required the stimulus of sex to have a releasing effect on him. We knew, and lived in a kind of terror of what it might bring on Carrie'.<sup>46</sup> These fears proved well-founded, transpiring, eventually, in divorce and the suicide of both parties. While his indiscretions

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'beauty' in the world also reinforces London's perception of the intrinsic connection between sex and art. This connection was, of course, extremely self-serving. Sterling's conviction in this philosophy led him to justify his numerous indiscretions as a constant search, as his biographer Thomas Benediktsson articulates, 'to experience transcendent raptures through extremes of sensation. [...] Sex was a way of releasing the subconscious creative impulse. Hence their briefness'. Benediktsson's rhetoric places sex in the same category as other heightened experiences enjoyed by Sterling and London in Carmel: physical exertions and demonstrations of hypermasculinity were similar 'extremes of sensation'. Casual sex was promoted as crucially associated with artistic capabilities and thus justified through Sterling's understanding of his needs as an artist. Austin likewise reflects on other colonists' awareness that 'George was always ridden by restless impotencies of energy which only by sharp exaggeration of sensation would find their natural outlet in creative expression'. Be it swimming in the bay or engaging in casual liaisons, these 'extremes' or 'exaggeration' of sensation had a similarly invigorating effect on Sterling. However, where the fraternal environment of the art colony provided opportunities for physical activities, extramarital affairs were significantly harder to adapt into the concept of marriage. Noel, *Footloose in Arcadia*, pp. 82-94; Benediktsson, *George Sterling*, p. 32; Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 300.

<sup>44</sup> Noel, *Footloose in Arcadia*, p. 120. The concept of artistic autonomy has provoked much lively philosophical debate, particularly in terms of the 'absence of ideological and conceptual restraint' which 'guarantees the continuing [...] inventiveness of artistic production'. My focus here is not on the broader social situation which influences art but on that which influences the artist, a context which nonetheless shares the same guiding principle that 'the artist is free only when he does what he pleases, how he pleases, and for whatever reason he pleases'. Art-colonists discussed in this chapter were influenced and emboldened by this mantra in their challenge to the restraint dictated by conventional gender roles which they felt inhibited their creative impulses. Paul Crowther, 'Art and Autonomy', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 21 (1981), 12-21 (p. 12).

<sup>45</sup> Benediktsson, *George Sterling*, p. 28; Noel, *Footloose in Arcadia*, p. 87.

<sup>46</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 302.

were dismissed as ‘the traditional poet’s faults [*sic*]’ in newspaper reports about the divorce, they were faults that Carrie could no longer tolerate.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the unhappy end to his marriage, the art colony milieu had provided an opportunity to engage in the heightened experiences Sterling perceived as central to the creation of art and had fostered his attempted negotiation of male-female relationships in order to legitimize his philandering. He and London saw a genuine possibility for this revision, rationalizing casual affairs with the Law of Ascendant Mating. One of London’s favourite ideas, it prompted both London and Sterling to declare that women would naturally prefer a fraction of the affections of a brilliant man to all of those of an ordinary man:

Jack thought – and Jack had material enough, God wot, on which to base a conclusion – that the assault that men of genius yielded to, or withstood according to their capacity, was the biological necessity of women to mate up, ascendingly, preferring, he thought, the tenth share in a man of distinction to the whole of an average man.<sup>48</sup>

London did indeed have ‘material’ to prove his belief in this mantra. He maintained his marriage to Charmian until his untimely death while women continued to flock around him adoringly.<sup>49</sup> His second marriage essentially followed the tenets of the Law of Ascendant Mating: Charmian followed in her husband’s wake, allowing him the autonomy of movement which had put a strain on his first marriage, particularly after the birth of their two daughters:

Woman with her avid desire for four walls that must be kept strong to protect her young is the enduring grief alike of the poet, the creator, the dreamer. She brings her narrow little idea of what’s right in the door and every suggestion of beauty and bigness in life flies out the window.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> ‘George Sterling a Poet? Read his Wife’s Charges’, *San Francisco Call*, 16 December 1913, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, pp. 302-03.

<sup>49</sup> According to Austin, ‘Women flung themselves at Jack, lay in wait for him’. *Earth Horizon*, p. 303.

<sup>50</sup> Noel, *Footloose in Arcadia*, p. 150.

Where his first marriage failed to sanction his individualistic freedoms, his second proved to be more successful. For London, the exaltation of hypermasculinity, and the heightened experiences which demonstrated a certain kind of man, underpinned his ideas about the possibility of rethinking the way conventional marriage was supposed to operate. His daughter, however, following quite literally in her father's footsteps, reveals the double standard that exists at the heart of this self-serving approach to gendered behaviour and the conventions of marriage. In a newspaper article documenting Joan London's divorce, a journalist explained that her father could leave the home 'when his soul yearned for the open road [...] and he got away with it because he was great and perhaps because he was a man' yet 'when his daughter Joan did the same things she got divorced'.<sup>51</sup> Where male colonists like London had the opportunity to negotiate their independence with the expectations of marriage, it was often harder for female colonists to revise rigid ideas of femininity and the expectations of being a wife. Carmel's most prominent female colonist, Austin, encountered such a paradox in her marriage and in her dealings with her male peers in Carmel. She responded by moving to a colony where progressive women were finding their voices and where New Mexico's indigenous populations provided her with a way to remove herself from constrictive ideas of Anglo-American femininity.

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<sup>51</sup> Newspaper clipping fragment, [n.d.], Jack London Papers, Box 2.

**Figure 1:** Jack London and George Sterling go for a swim in Carmel





## Mary Austin in Carmel and Santa Fe

Mary Austin's time at the Carmel and Santa Fe colonies highlights the difficulties she faced in questioning the boundaries on women's behaviour. Like Jack London and George Sterling, Austin sought a sense of independence as well as a feeling of connectedness to a spouse and attempted a similar rethinking of male-female relationships. However, her notion of independence consisted of an assertiveness and intellectuality which she herself believed to be deemed 'unwomanly' and ultimately she concluded that independence was incompatible with the expectations of marriage. In New Mexico Austin relinquished any attempt to reconcile her life as an artist with the role of wife, refusing to be a sexual being in order to fully embody the role of artist. Here she adopted 'Indian' qualities and engaged in the mimesis of 'Indian' practices in order to evade the rigid confines of Anglo-American femininity. Renouncing the sense of attachment between a husband and wife, Austin finds a different kind of connectedness through her feeling of affinity with this other culture. Tracing Austin's experiences of the Carmel and Santa Fe colonies as well as the literature she produced during this period illuminates her evolving response. Her experiences in both colonies, recounted in articles and in her autobiography, are reinforced by imaginative attempts to expand the opportunities available to women presented in much of her fiction.

Austin felt caught in the trap of Anglo-American gender ideals, where difference was coded as limitation.<sup>52</sup> Through both her experiences and her artistic rendering of the predicament of femininity, Austin articulates her view that 'there was a human norm and it was the average man. Whatever in woman differed from this norm was a female weakness, of intelligence, of character, of physique', as she explains in her autobiography.<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that Austin wanted to be a man but that she endeavoured to play a different kind of feminine role. Rather than assume the attributes of traditional masculinity (such as Sterling's and London's displays of physical strength) Austin sought the space and freedom to be a different sort of woman: specifically negotiating ways

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<sup>52</sup> Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion*, pp. 185-210.

<sup>53</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 156.

of being an artist and a wife in ways which would be respected rather than disparaged. In this Austin engaged with contemporary feminist thought which challenged the limited opportunities available to women.<sup>54</sup> Deemed as either unwomanly or inherently weak within traditional frameworks of femininity, Austin utilized the southwest's indigenous populations in order to evade this harsh duality. Through access to an 'other' set of values, practices and behaviours Austin aimed to mould and expand what it meant to be a woman in early-twentieth-century America.

Austin's experiences at the Carmel colony shed light on this exploration of emancipation from the roles of wife and mother, a preoccupation which is subsequently reflected in much of her fiction written during this period. By the time she began construction of her Carmel home in 1906 Austin had begun proceedings to divorce her husband, from whom she had lived apart for nearly four years.<sup>55</sup> After marrying in 1891, Austin had immediately taken to the desert surroundings of her husband's home in Owens Valley, California but not to her role as wife, a situation intensified by the birth of her severely disabled daughter Ruth. Escaping domesticity, Austin took Ruth to Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco where she became acquainted with Sterling and his artistic circle and began to experience new opportunities. After finding success with the 1903 publication of *The Land of Little Rain*, a paeon to the California desert of her marital home, Austin made the decision to use the profits from the book to board Ruth in a medical facility. Adjustment to her separation, guilt over Ruth's institutionalization and an evolving understanding of the woman as artist subsequently occupied Austin's mind during her time at Carmel.

Austin's success as a writer fuelled her interest in the opportunities available to intellectual women in early-twentieth-century America. Understanding her new role as artist as one which placed her within a group who were 'proud of their differences, restless in traditional settings, and determined to live as writers and artists', her new found success served to draw attention to her deviation from conventional ideas of femininity.<sup>56</sup> This is clear from Austin's first encounter with

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<sup>54</sup> Stout, *Through the Window*, p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> Lanigan, *Mary Austin*, p. 83.

<sup>56</sup> Goodman and Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West*, p. 70.

many soon-to-be Carmel colonists in 1904.<sup>57</sup> Sterling invited Austin to join him and his intellectual circle for dinner at Coppa's, San Francisco's artistic haunt, whose impressions were formed from ideas of 'appropriate' female appearance and demeanour:

A duckling surprised to find herself a swan – and much deceived – she felt connected with her own kind. Sterling's friends, on the other hand, saw a Midwestern matron who talked too much. According to Jimmy Hopper, she didn't have a chance. The group took one look at her square face and stout body and, through a series of secret hand and foot signals, gave thumbs down.<sup>58</sup>

Austin's mostly male dinner companions felt her to be too 'homely' and too 'assertive' to be part of their group, yet this did not quell their interest in her 'talk about the desert'.<sup>59</sup> Although she was intelligent and wrote 'beautiful stuff', James Hopper apparently declared, she was not pretty.<sup>60</sup> Accepted as an artist but not as a 'proper' woman, Austin was alienated by her unattractive and supposedly unfeminine qualities: she produced beauty but failed to embody it.

Her professional credentials could not outweigh the perceived lack in her 'proper' feminine wiles but were enough to grant her entry to the Carmel colony, which she had been visiting since 1904 and where she moved two years later.<sup>61</sup> Sterling, for instance, tolerated her 'pushiness' because he was enamoured with her writing, but was quick to promise to 'spare' prospective visitors from her.<sup>62</sup> This did not escape Austin's attention, especially when she arrived at the Carmel art colony 'devoid of social graces and acutely sensitive about her shortcomings'.<sup>63</sup> Her response was to deny her 'feminine' qualities completely, forming a duality of sex versus art. Austin later recalled that at Carmel men and women talked freely of the activities which release artistic capabilities, with one notable exception:

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<sup>57</sup> Including James Hopper, Harry Lafler and Perry Newberry.

<sup>58</sup> Goodman and Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>59</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Warren Unna, *The Coppa Murals* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1952), p. 8; Orth, p. 200.

<sup>61</sup> Augusta Fink, *I-Mary: A Biography of Mary Austin* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1983), p. 125.

<sup>62</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>63</sup> Fink, p. 125.

We talked of every aspect of release but [...] the one involved in my never needing either a drink or a love affair to unlock the fountain of the deep-self. [...] So I am left in doubt if, seeing I had no such problem, it never occurred to them that I might know the reason why, or if it was the profound, accustomed indifference of the male to what goes on in the mind of any woman who has not personally stirred him.<sup>64</sup>

Austin's refutation of the heightened experiences Sterling perceived as central to his artistic sensibilities places these activities in opposition to her creative abilities. As Anna Carew-Miller articulates, Austin's struggle was against the 'cultural expectation that a woman who wants to achieve in the male realm will leave her body behind her. Society tells her that as an artist she must not be a wife or mother – a sexual being'.<sup>65</sup> For Austin, this is the crux of her anxieties: Can a woman be both an artist and a wife? Is there room for rebellion against and conformity to society's expectations of womanhood?

Exploring the possibility that these roles of artist and woman are fundamentally incompatible, Austin utilizes 'Indianness' in her life and her literature as a way to distance herself from, and thus reflect on, this dichotomy. Through her fiction Austin plays out the conflict between a 'desire for human love and the power and status she holds when she keeps herself apart from men'.<sup>66</sup> Mark Hoyer goes so far as to suggest that 'Austin's exoticizing of the Indian is a tactical move to confront the audience with its own "primitive" prejudices against women'.<sup>67</sup> By neglecting the heightened 'Indianized' experiences adopted by Austin herself, Hoyer suggests an agenda of social reform rather than Austin's exploration of her own anxieties. However, his summation that in her

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<sup>64</sup> Austin, 'George Sterling at Carmel', p. 69.

<sup>65</sup> Anna Carew-Miller, 'Between Worlds, Crossing Borders: Mary Austin, Liminality, and the Dilemma of Women's Creativity', in *Exploring Lost Borders*, ed. by Melody Graulich and Elizabeth Klimasmith (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999), pp. 105-27 (p. 113).

<sup>66</sup> Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 170.

<sup>67</sup> Mark Hoyer, 'Ritual Drama/Dramatic Ritual: Austin's "Indian Plays"', in *Exploring Lost Borders* ed. by Graulich and Klimasmith, pp. 39-63 (p. 44); Mark Hoyer, *Dancing Ghosts: Native American and Christian Syncretism in Mary Austin's Work* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998), p. 112.

work the Native American was partly ‘a mirror reflecting “woman”’ is an eloquent articulation of Austin’s adoption of ‘Indianness’ as a means to exploring the possibilities of womanhood.<sup>68</sup>

Her anxieties about female sexuality are artistically rendered in a number of her works of fiction and drama through the figure of the *Chisera*, a Paiute medicine woman who often appears in the stories of southwestern Native American tribes. Separateness and celibacy help harness the *Chisera*’s powers to bring blessings for her tribe – and it is, indeed, always ‘her’ tribe since the *Chisera* is always a woman.<sup>69</sup> Austin introduces the *Chisera* figure dancing to promote rain in her 1905 novel *The Flock*:

First the Indians fed and then the *Chisera* danced. [...] Is there in fact a vibration in nature which struck into rhythm precipitates rain, as a random chord on the organ brings a rush of tears? At any rate it rained, *and* it rained, and it *rained!*<sup>70</sup>

Reference to nature’s ‘rhythm’ and the creation of music infer a connection between the medicine woman and an artistic sensibility, connotations which are reinforced in the *Chisera*’s subsequent appearance in Austin’s 1911 play *The Arrow-Maker*. Austin asserts in her preface that the *Chisera* is ‘the Genius, one of those singular and powerful characters whom we are still, with all our learning, unable to account for without falling back on the primitive conception of gift’.<sup>71</sup> In its imaginative rendering, the *Chisera* is called upon by the tribal council to help choose a war leader when there is a dispute between neighbouring tribes in the Sierra foothills. Her choice is Simwa, the arrow maker, with whom she has been conducting an illicit affair and for whom she has been ‘making medicine’ to bless him with success. His leadership leads to victory at first, but Simwa spurns the *Chisera* to marry the chief’s daughter. The *Chisera*’s powers are debilitated by grief and soon the tribe is beset by various woes. Resenting her isolation and necessarily ‘mateless’ position, the *Chisera* meets a tragic end when she breaks her vow of celibacy.<sup>72</sup> Shot by an arrow from her former lover in the play’s

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<sup>68</sup> Hoyer, ‘Ritual Drama/Dramatic Ritual’, p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> Hoyer, *Dancing Ghosts*, p. 104.

<sup>70</sup> Mary Austin, *The Flock* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), p. 232.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Austin, *The Arrow-Maker* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), p. x. Hathi Trust ebook.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

dramatic finale, the *Chisera* is reprimanded for the choice she makes in the difficult predicament of femininity: 'to live as a woman and be limited to that submissive social role or to live as an androgynous being whose voice has prophetic authority'.<sup>73</sup>

Austin's preoccupation with the emotional cost of female autonomy similarly permeates the narratives of *Lost Borders*, a collection of short stories published in 1909, after she had left the Carmel colony to travel through Europe. In 'The Return of Mr. Wills', for instance, the eponymous Mr Wills abandons his California home, his wife and his four young children when he embarks on a three-year trip in search of a series of lost mines. The sketch functions as a meditation on the ease with which a man can evade familial commitments:

I do not know if the man was honest with himself, or if he knew by this time that the clue of a lost mine was the baldest of excuses merely to be out and away from everything that savored of definiteness and responsibility.<sup>74</sup>

Austin's title, however, emphasizes that the focus here is not on Mr Wills' leaving, but on his return. Mrs Wills struggles to adjust to her husband's absence at first but soon comes to embrace her 'new sense of independence and power', especially the paid work which leads her to contest 'the tradition that a husband is the natural provider'.<sup>75</sup>

The final story in the collection reinforces the imaginative expression of Austin's anxieties. 'The Walking Woman' tells the story of an unnamed Anglo-American woman who rejects socially-constructed gender politics by, quite literally, walking away from them: as the narrator notes, the Walking Woman felt she had 'no recourse but her own feet to carry her out of that predicament'.<sup>76</sup> Echoing Austin's understanding of her life's travels discussed in Chapter Two and consciously anonymized like the *Chisera*, Austin's protagonist rids herself of her old life when she walks away from it, with the narrator asserting that it was 'about that time that she lost her name. I am

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<sup>73</sup> Carew-Miller, 'Between Worlds, Crossing Borders', p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> Mary Austin, 'The Return of Mr Wills', in *Lost Borders* (New York: Harper, 1909), pp. 52-64 (pp. 57-58). All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Austin, 'The Walking Woman', in *Lost Borders*, pp. 195-209 (p. 199).

convinced that she never told it because she did not know it herself. She was the Walking Woman'.<sup>77</sup> Having 'walked off all sense of society-made values' the Walking Woman consecrates herself to the California desert and the self-determined life which has left her 'sobered and healed at last'.<sup>78</sup> Yet, interestingly, Austin refrains from presenting the Walking Woman's fate as wholly positive. Once again, with her protagonist's decisive autonomy comes an inevitable sacrifice:

On the mere evidence of her way of life she was cracked; not quite broken, but unserviceable. Yet in her talk there was both wisdom and information, and the word she brought about trails and water-holes was as reliable as an Indian's.<sup>79</sup>

Reference to the Walking Woman's knowledge of the region is a clear allusion to Austin's own, a 'wisdom' which nevertheless cannot outweigh a 'cracked' set of behaviours for either the Walking Woman or Austin herself: perhaps 'unserviceable' is the adjective to which Austin's male dinner companions at Coppa's were alluding. The artist, with her need for autonomy, is incompatible with socially-prescribed ideas of femininity: to be an artist is ultimately unwomanly.

Austin celebrates the choice of creativity over femininity in the 1912 novel *A Woman of Genius*, in which a woman escapes her Midwestern home in order to pursue a career as an actress. Written while Austin was visiting Carmel to help with the local theatre, Austin's protagonist suggests that 'the only place for a woman artist is on the stage' since, as Carew-Miller asserts, 'the world outside it provides her with little space to be herself'.<sup>80</sup> Austin, however, did not seek solace on the literal stage as her protagonist does, but instead found the 'space to be herself' in the improvisatory milieu of western art colonies. Like the theatre, the network of temporary association afforded exploration and the playing out of different roles, as well as a comparable cessation of social expectations. Here Austin could be autonomous and creative, playing out a different kind of femininity than socially-prescribed gendered behaviour sanctioned.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 199, p. 208.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 198-99.

<sup>80</sup> Carew-Miller, 'Between Worlds, Crossing Borders', p. 109.

Furthermore, like her author surrogate in *A Woman of Genius*, Austin utilized aspects of play and imitative behaviour to embody this role through the adoption of 'Indianness'. Austin's perception of the therapeutic value in imitating Native American activities can be traced back to her days as a newlywed in Owens Valley. Seeking sanctuary from the dissatisfaction of domesticity, her biographer Augusta Fink explains:

Mary accompanied the young *mahalas*, absorbing the deeper meanings that went with the motions of their hands. She found healing in the simple activities. [...] Best of all was the feeling of kinship with these quiet women who did not give their friendship lightly.<sup>81</sup>

Seeking sanctuary in 'Indianness', Austin saw the otherness of this 'Indian' kind of femininity as a viable alternative to the rigid constraints of Anglo-American gender ideals. Participating in Native American activities, Austin felt she could access this otherness and even feel an affinity with these different women. This was an opportunity to replace the sense of attachment to a husband with a different kind of connectedness.

These imitative practices have understandably been negatively interpreted by Austin's critics. Kevin Starr, for instance, asserts that 'there was always in her make-up a blend of sincerity and hokum, of spontaneity and playing-for-effect'.<sup>82</sup> But Starr's disparagement overlooks the valuable uses of play. Placed in opposition to 'sincerity' play becomes something false and disingenuous, connotations which ultimately dismiss Austin as merely the self-indulgent impersonator of an oppressed group. Yet her adoption of 'Indianness' is also suggestive of play providing a 'looseness' conducive to exploration and thus should not be dismissed as mere 'hokum'. Indeed, Richard Schechner asserts that play is often subjected to this denigration as intrinsically 'tainted by unreality, inauthenticity, duplicity, make believe, [...] and inconsequentiality'.<sup>83</sup> The mimesis of 'Indian' behaviours helped Austin summon her creative energies by distancing her from the constraints of conventional gendered behaviour. As such, this 'playing-for-effect' had quite

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<sup>81</sup> Fink, *I-Mary: A Biography of Mary Austin*, p. 74.

<sup>82</sup> Kevin Starr, 'Mary Austin: Mystic, Writer, Conservationist', *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 61 (1976), p. 34.

<sup>83</sup> Schechner, *The Future of Ritual*, p. 27.



substantial and useful effects. In playing out a different role she could harness the power of exhibiting consciously different behaviours. As Austin asserts in her autobiography, 'to get at the meaning of work you must make all its motions, both of body and mind'.<sup>84</sup> Elaborating on her attraction to imitative 'Indianness' in *The American Rhythm*, a book on Native American verse published in 1923, Austin explains:

I have naturally a mimetic temperament which drives me toward the understanding of life by living it. If I wished to know what went into the patterns of the basket makers, I gathered willows in the moon of white butterflies and fern stems when these were ripest. I soaked the fibers in running water, turning them as the light turned, and did my ineffectual best to sit on the ground scraping them flat with an obsidian blade, holding the extra fibers between my toes. [...] Now and then in the midst of these processes I felt myself caught up in the collective mind.<sup>85</sup>

Through such practices Austin appropriated imitated behaviour to escape 'fixity and definition', 'remaining in [the] gray area of the border, between (or across) genders, between visionary and ordinary life'.<sup>86</sup>

The distinction between 'playing Indian' and playing through 'Indianness' is pivotal here as Austin is not trying to mask her Anglo-American identity within this other culture but instead highlights her adoption of this otherness. Wearing Native American blankets and participating in Native rituals, Austin exhibited certain behaviours and performative practices which she saw as challenging Anglo-American ideas of femininity in much the same way that critics have theorized cross-dressing. As Marjorie Garber famously articulates in *Vested Interests*, the appeal of cross-dressing is its 'status as a sign of the constructedness of gender categories'.<sup>87</sup> Austin's appropriation of 'Indianness' subsequently created 'a space of possibility structuring and confounding' ideas of

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<sup>84</sup> Austin, *Earth Horizon*, p. 274.

<sup>85</sup> Mary Austin, *The American Rhythm* (Santa Fe: Touchstone, 2007), pp. 40-41.

<sup>86</sup> Carew-Miller, 'Between Worlds, Crossing Borders', p. 107.

<sup>87</sup> Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 9.

femininity which acted as a 'disruptive element that intervenes'.<sup>88</sup> Garber's argument that cross-dressing highlights the 'failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another' is a useful lens through which to view these gendered and racialized behaviours as female colonists' adoption of 'Indianness' emphasized a similar 'failure of definitional distinction'.<sup>89</sup> However, Austin's negotiation of ideas of femininity suggest a malleability of these supposedly distinct categories rather than a 'border crossing' of one gender into another. Austin subsequently became a kind of 'third term' which provided 'a way of describing a space of possibility'.<sup>90</sup> To her mind, she existed in the space between imitating and being, playing out the third term between signifier and signified suggested by Garber, and thus successfully distanced herself from the sign systems of socially-prescribed Anglo-American gendered behaviour.

### **Harvey Fergusson in Santa Fe and Taos**

Harvey Fergusson used the heterosocial milieu of the New Mexican art colonies to explore an idea of marriage which revised conventional ideas of both masculinity and femininity. He sought to review the expectations of marriage to accommodate his attraction to women who were pushing the boundaries of the kind of women they wanted to be with his own beliefs and behaviours (and particularly his tendency towards a passivity traditionally coded as feminine).<sup>91</sup> At the same time, anxieties surrounding this engagement with the way conventional marriage was supposed to operate resulted in a sense of ambivalence that such a reformulation of marriage would make him less of a man. His diary entries from the summer of 1924, spent at the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies with his soon-to-be second wife, Rebecca (Becky) McCann, stress the attempted resolution of these anxieties. They are imaginatively reinforced by the novel shaped by this visit, *Wolf Song*, which

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>91</sup> D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, p. 175.

fictionalizes aspects of Fergusson's and McCann's relationship, providing the writer with an opportunity to artistically negotiate the practices of marriage.<sup>92</sup>

For his biographer, Robert Gish, Fergusson's art colony experiences highlight the writer's 'divided allegiances' between the east, which represented obligation, marriage and responsibility, and a west which Fergusson associated with independence, creativity and promiscuity.<sup>93</sup> Fergusson travelled between his New York home and western art colonies in order to foster creative sensibilities he felt unable to cultivate in the city.<sup>94</sup> Aware of his needs as an artist, his time at the art colonies of Santa Fe and Taos was borne of an impulse to find 'the right environment' in which to write.<sup>95</sup> Fergusson clearly felt the pull of these dual attractions, evidenced throughout his diaries, but his experiences at the western art colony add another dimension to this interpretation. The qualities of the network of temporary association that colonies produced allowed colonists to control their level of engagement with the community and thus accommodated both individual movements and a sense of belonging. It was the perfect environment, therefore, to attempt to reconcile his 'divided allegiances' to independence and marriage as well. Be it the art colony community or a spouse, this was essentially a dilemma about the right level of human contact. Fergusson's diaries from this time reveal a constant rumination about the range of human contact present at these colonies, praising Witter Bynner as 'capable of all kinds of human contact' while himself feeling 'uplifted by a sense of much pleasant human contact'.<sup>96</sup> Despite this gratification of friendships and romantic relationships Fergusson craves subsequent isolation at times, his 'interest flow[ing] back to the East' when he

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<sup>92</sup> Harvey Fergusson, *Wolf Song* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955). All subsequent references are to this edition.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 164.

<sup>94</sup> After his first foray into the colony environment in 1922, for instance, Fergusson asserts that 'next time I make a trip to New Mexico I'll come here [Taos] first, then Santa Fe, and finally Albuquerque where I'll do whatever I can in writing', feeling that New Mexican art colonies were 'a great place for inspiration, not for work'. His diaries relay a summer spent socializing, dating and attending numerous parties while also expressing a longing to return to New York craving 'ideas, books, interesting and civilized people'. Diary, 27 July 1922 and 5 August 1922, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1; Gish, p. 163.

<sup>95</sup> Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson*, p. 163.

<sup>96</sup> Diary, 6 September 1924, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

‘can’t escape people’ at the colonies.<sup>97</sup> It is this ambivalence and the desire to reconcile these twin pulls which are repeatedly played out in the art colony milieu: allowing artists to limit their engagement, the art colony was the ideal place for Fergusson to explore his conflicted ideas about human contact.

There are echoes here of similar anxieties played out by Jack London and George Sterling in Carmel, but Fergusson differs in that he not only explores his own beliefs and behaviours but also acknowledges changing ideas of femininity. Fergusson shares a penchant for alcohol-fuelled promiscuity with his Carmel peers, for instance, but his experiences of casual sex suggest a hesitancy lacking for London or Sterling. Sterling’s articulation that he wants to cultivate a taste for ‘cold water’ and ‘just one girl’ is echoed in Fergusson’s self-instruction to ‘drink NOTHING’ while his diaries record the details of numerous casual liaisons.<sup>98</sup> Of one such fleeting sexual encounter Fergusson asserts: ‘The secret visit in the dark. The sense of crime, stealth, of creeping through, over, under barriers – to freedom, to self assertion, to lust, to nakedness’ adding, as an afterthought, ‘Shame also’.<sup>99</sup> Where London and Sterling exonerated their actions through the Law of Ascendant Mating, Fergusson displays a distinct ambivalence about casual sex. Abundant exhilarating adjectives connote a sense of illicit pleasure and combine to produce a rhythm of excitement which is ultimately undermined by the addition of the addendum. The desire for sexual abandon here brings simultaneous unease.

Fergusson’s description of another liaison reveals his attraction to women engaged in similar negotiations of sexual autonomy as well as his anxiety about women who were playing out new ideas of gendered behaviour. He acknowledges women’s changing ideas of femininity and is attracted to this new kind of woman, but feels simultaneously intimidated. Fergusson anonymizes the woman in this encounter, referring to her only as the mysterious ‘M. L.’, but devotes ample space to her in his diaries suggesting that he was intrigued by this different kind of woman:

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<sup>97</sup> Diary, 27 August 1923 and 3 August 1923, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

<sup>98</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, p. 14.

<sup>99</sup> Diary, November 1924 (?), Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

A pretty face, a voluptuous, slightly slouchy, round shouldered figure. A love of profanity [...] and a] consciousness of sin and freedom. I drove her home at two in the morning and she wanted me to make love to her. Then unexpectedly, she wanted me to take her and we made love under a tree. Both cold, self conscious. The caress a failure. [...] She was kind about my failure saying it was always so at first with men. A woman of a new kind. [...] Just like men in their perfect unself conscious [*sic*] promiscuity, which does not damage their self respect.<sup>100</sup>

Fergusson is drawn to this new female behaviour with its similar view of promiscuity and 'consciousness of sin and freedom'. But this attraction is not without trepidation over this different kind of woman, trepidation which manifests itself in the failed 'caress'. Impotence is a common concern exhibited in Fergusson's diaries and also features in many of his ideas for unpublished work. The writer considers featuring such issues in his fiction as a means to exploring his real-life experiences. One, for instance, reads 'Adolescent falls for and idolises married woman, she gets him into bed, he impotent, she laughs, he drowns himself'.<sup>101</sup> Fergusson's awareness of his impotence, his failure to embody an idea of masculine virility, is artistically rendered in many such blunt notations.

Fergusson's literary engagement with gendered sign systems is emphasized in the conclusion of his 1924 novel *Women and Wives* which chronicles the unhappy marriage between Jim and Catherine Royce, both of whom grow disillusioned with the monotony and discontent of their marriage. In a scene reminiscent of London's lupine protagonists, Jim sees the metaphor of his marriage in a caged wolf at the zoo:

Jim felt infinitely sorry for the creature. It was full of energy and friendliness. It had a great capacity for life and a great eagerness for it, and here it was shut up in a little iron cage until it should die. [...] Almost he felt tempted to sneak back at night and set the creature free.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Diary, 6 September 1924, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

<sup>101</sup> 'Story Ideas – Never Used', Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 2.

<sup>102</sup> Harvey Fergusson, *Women and Wives* (New York: Knopf, 1924), p. 131.

Thus, after his wife leaves him, Jim declares his 'freedom as a glorious prospect, reaching beyond the horizon of life as he knew it', seized by 'an irresistible longing for the open and for sunny countries, a compelling need to escape the gloom and narrowness of the cubby-holes in which most men spend their lives'.<sup>103</sup> Yet it transpires to be his ex-wife Catherine who finds new freedom and satisfaction with a man who appreciates her intellect while Jim reneges on his planned adventures and eventually succumbs again to the confines of marriage. His second partner, Fanny, is presented as a saccharine maternal figure that, at the novel's close, infantilizes Jim and, notably, observes a deficiency in his masculine physicality:

'I love you, cutie', she murmured. [...] Under the caress of her hands and her words, Jim lay quiescent, silent, comforted. And yet he could not be happy, he could not share the joy that rang so sincerely in her foolish loving babble. [...] This was triumph and fulfilment for her, but for him it was surrender – surrender of the freedom he had not been strong enough to use. [...] Her caressing hands were fluttering about his head. He could feel the tips of her fingers upon his scalp.

'You're getting a little bald spot up here', she murmured tenderly. 'Did you know that, cutie?'<sup>104</sup>

Jim's diminishing hairline is symbolic of his deteriorating masculinity, succumbing to marital commitment instead of the solitary life of an adventurer. In this, Fergusson gives imaginative voice to his feeling that to want commitment is somehow unmanly; that men who do not want to 'roam free' are unmasculine. Despite their differences, Catherine and Fanny are both represented as assertive, proactive women: be it more independence or more commitment, they acknowledge what they want and go after it. Jim, conversely, is distinctly passive by comparison and ends the novel departing from London's wolf-life idea of hypermasculinity both physically and psychologically. Written and published when Fergusson was living in Washington and New York, *Women and Wives*

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 296-97.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 309-10.

relays Fergusson's sense of resignation to the unsatisfying conventions of marriage. Not wanting to reject marriage for a life of individualistic isolation, Catherine's subsequent marriage in the novel reflects the writer's burgeoning belief that commitment to someone intellectually stimulating and challenging is the only possibility for avoiding this monotonous and unhappy situation.

Fergusson had a desire to be married. When he invited McCann to spend the summer with him in New Mexico, neither was yet divorced from their respective partners. Given the opportunity to escape the unsatisfying confines of marriage, Fergusson instead chooses to immediately embark on a new relationship. Their time at the art colonies of Santa Fe and Taos elucidate Fergusson's sense of the value of marriage and also his need to reformulate its dynamic. The pair chose to spend this summer in Santa Fe and Taos instead of Albuquerque in order to avoid causing a scandal: they were both, officially, still married to other people.<sup>105</sup> The alternative community and relaxed atmosphere of the network of temporary association provided a space outside of the mainstream culture of cities like Albuquerque, and thus provided the ideal milieu for Fergusson's explorations into revised male-female relationships. These explorations came with both highs and lows as the couple played and fought, enjoyed hikes together and endured tremendous arguments. Their turbulent time at the art colony is described in his diaries from this time as he ruminates on his vacillating view of commitment:

The question that still agitates me is whether I am capable of devotion to B[ecky]. If not to her then certainly to no one. [...] It is a conflict I can't resolve. Let destiny resolve it. If she wants to stick I will too and take what comes.<sup>106</sup>

Fergusson and McCann's relationship is detailed extensively in Fergusson's diaries, quite at odds with his first wife, Polly Pretty, who barely appears at all. There was, perhaps, more to resolve in this second match. Disillusioned with the conventions of marriage, he wants to try it differently this time; rethinking male-female relationships with someone quite different. McCann, an artist in her own

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<sup>105</sup> McCann had been once widowed and was soon to be once divorced. Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson*, p. 167.

<sup>106</sup> Diary, 5 September 1924, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

right, apparently viewed marriage as a 'complement' to the long career she envisaged, echoing Fergusson's desires for artistic autonomy with her own.<sup>107</sup> Fergusson's diaries chronicle a long and stormy courtship culminating in their marriage in 1927, the year *Wolf Song* was published, and McCann's death later that same year.

Where *Women and Wives* imaginatively explores Fergusson's unsuccessful first marriage, *Wolf Song* reflects his attempt to reformulate the ideals of marriage with McCann and the colony milieu which facilitated these explorations. *Wolf Song's* dedication to McCann suggests that the book fictionalizes many elements of her and Fergusson's relationship, reflecting the writer's anxieties during his time at the art colonies of Santa Fe and Taos. *Wolf Song* follows Sam Lash, a mountain man working as a trapper in 1830s New Mexico. At a dance at a Taos trading post he is immediately beguiled by Lola Salazar, the daughter of a wealthy Hispanic family. Her family's disapproval of a non-Hispanic suitor leads to a difficult and brief courtship and their eventual elopement. After a fleeting honeymoon Sam leaves his new bride to embark on another season of trapping beaver, but is quickly overcome by longing and returns to her. On his way back, however, he is intersected by Black Wolf, a Cheyenne warrior who attempts to steal Sam's horses as an offering to the family of his own intended bride. Black Wolf is killed in the ensuing fight and Sam continues on his journey to Lola, only to find she has been taken back to Taos by her family. After much deliberation, Sam decides to give up his mountain man way of life and settle down to establish a home with Lola.

Critics have lauded *Wolf Song* as one of the most accomplished novels representing the mountain man figure, but further critical interpretation has not been forthcoming.<sup>108</sup> William Pilkington undertakes some analysis of Fergusson's novels in his biography but his comments remain brief and superficial. His discussion of *Wolf Song*, for instance, focuses on the employment of Fergusson's historical sources, particularly with regards to the mountain man way of life. Fergusson's

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<sup>107</sup> Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson*, p. 180.

<sup>108</sup> Milton, *The Novel of the American West*, pp. 230-63.



main source in this respect was George R. Ruxton's *Life in the Far West*; a work which Pilkington asserts provided Fergusson with a faithful historical grounding.<sup>109</sup> The novel's style is also mentioned, with Pilkington drawing comparisons between *Wolf Song*'s lyrical style and the single instance of Fergusson's published poetry.<sup>110</sup> In this way literary analysis is eschewed in favour of highlighting elements of biography. My own analysis builds on biographers' observations and the connections they draw between Fergusson's life and literature. However I also extend this limited body of criticism by analysing how Fergusson's novels and experiences give imaginative expression to the unique art colony milieu and reveal the gender anxieties he was confronting therein.

The story of Sam and Lola reflects the problems Fergusson was playing with in New Mexico in the summer of 1924 but *Wolf Song* also artistically renders the specific form of settlement provided by the western art colony. Poised on the brink of the mountain man's demise, Sam spans the epoch between a time (for Anglo-Americans) of free-spirited adventurers and settlement by homesteaders. As such, he echoes the tensions experienced by many art-colonists between being 'supremely individualistic and self-reliant' and 'devoted to the values of community'.<sup>111</sup> Further, although setting his story before the formation of these art colonies Fergusson depicts Taos as a pivotal meeting point between diverse people, where a range of experiences interact and overlap. It is here that Sam experiences the bacchanalian pleasures of sex and alcohol, revelling in 'the feel and voice of women' as well as 'the madness and oblivion of liquor'.<sup>112</sup> Soon Taos also becomes associated with love and passion as he meets and falls for Lola and steals her away from her disapproving family. Yet it is also ultimately the place to which they return, reconciling with her family and ending Sam's days as a mountain man. Taos, in the novel as in the art colony, is both a

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<sup>109</sup> Pilkington, *Harvey Fergusson*, p. 115.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 116. Gish's biography also devotes space to discussion of Fergusson's literary works, but interpretation often relies on grandiose praise which never looks too intently at the intricacies of the novels. Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson*, p. 185.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>112</sup> Fergusson, *Wolf Song*, p. 38.

place of intense, individualistic experiences and a location for community and altered patterns of behaviour.

Fergusson's ambivalence about human contact at the art colony is echoed in Sam's vacillating response to Taos. He would arrive 'a creature of crying needs' who could 'crunch its gathered human sweetness between his teeth', yet soon enough he would find himself 'hating the smell of huddled sheltered men, longing for mountains'.<sup>113</sup> Comparisons with Fergusson's own response to other art-colonists and his ambivalence about the ideal level of human contact subsequently prove Pilkington's summation that 'woman' in *Wolf Song* is 'used in her familiar symbolic role' as 'a check and limit on male freedom' to be an overly simplistic interpretation.<sup>114</sup> Fergusson does expound this attitude in no uncertain terms at points during the novel, asserting, for instance, that 'Go where he will a man comes back to a woman. She pulls him down, she holds him down... She sucks out of him power and longing to go', but such declarations need to be considered in the wider context of the novel and of its conception rather than in the isolation that Pilkington argues.<sup>115</sup> Fergusson was drawn to women like McCann who embodied a new sense of female autonomy and creativity. Thus, rather than see this new kind of woman as negating these qualities in corresponding ideas of masculinity, providing a 'check' on conventional manliness, Fergusson attempted to play out a dynamic between the sexes which could accommodate a balance of power. As opposed to gender dynamics where one role was strong and the other submissive, he explored versions where these attributes could be shared. To condemn Lola as a purely negative force on man's freedom misses the nuances of the novel's narrative themes as well as of the anxieties Fergusson played out with McCann and fictionalized in Sam and Lola.

This notion is skilfully represented in the first of two pivotal fight scenes when Sam faces fellow mountain man Guillon. Drunk and declaring himself ready for a fight, Guillon provokes Sam by teasing him about his newlywed status. Taunting Sam by invoking traditional ideas of masculine

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>114</sup> Pilkington, *Harvey Fergusson*, p. 115.

<sup>115</sup> Fergusson, *Wolf Song*, p. 202.

sexual prowess he asks 'Was she too wild to ride? [...] Now he's caught a squaw he don't know what to do with her'.<sup>116</sup> Sam eventually takes the bait and a ferocious tussle ensues. Discovering the scene and the crowd of men who have gathered to watch, Lola decides to intervene:

'Quick, quick, quick!' she shrilled. 'Stop them! Stop them! He's killing him. He's killing my blond one... Stop them, you pigs!'

But nobody moved quickly enough to suit her. She ran over to the fire, picked up a blazing stick of fat pine, made a dash at Guillon and began beating him furiously. [...] A hot coal had slipped down inside his pants behind and he went writhing and squirming around almost tying himself in a knot to get it out.<sup>117</sup>

By brandishing a red-hot phallic symbol and ultimately by both branding and symbolically castrating Guillon with a hot coal, Lola emasculates Sam's opponent and, through her assertiveness, demonstrates a strength and power equal to her husband. This is an interesting intervention into contemporary ideas of biology as destiny: Can a man perform a male sex role, Fergusson ponders, without the physical manifestations of masculinity?<sup>118</sup> By impairing this most overt aspect of masculine physicality, the novel can proceed to explore gender politics in a less phallogentric world. But this progressive stance comes with a lingering ambivalence that such a revised form of marriage is only possible when a man is, in this case quite literally, less of a man.

The second fight sees Sam face Black Wolf in the symbolic culmination of Fergusson's gender anxieties. Through their fight Fergusson finds imaginative expression for his central query: Can he be more passive and relinquish some power to an attractively strong woman without feeling less of a man? Sam Lash and Black Wolf subsequently represent the clash of two different types of masculinity; they are two answers to this question. In name as well as character Black Wolf invokes the lycanthropic heroes presented by Jack London in *White Fang's* Buck or *The Sea Wolf's* Wolf

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>118</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, Volume 2: Sexchanges* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 326.

Larsen. He embodies the hypermasculinity espoused by London; the kind of man whose fierce individualism trumps marital commitment. Yet he is also a lone wanderer longing for a woman whose family he must win over, mirroring Sam's endeavour. As he rides away from home, singing traditional 'wolf songs', he sums up both his and Sam's situation: 'Wolf songs are always about women for every lone warrior rides away from a woman'.<sup>119</sup> Black Wolf and Sam Lash are doubles here, and thus both act as author surrogates. Black Wolf's demise is therefore suggestive of the demise of London's ideal of individualistic hypermasculinity and Fergusson's desire for new, more balanced male-female relationships. Their mirrored movements reinforce this symbolic confrontation, even as Sam conquers Black Wolf:

Sam threw him off and they lay a few feet apart, gasping, neither able to move.

After a long moment the Indian rolled over and came up on one elbow and Sam also half rose to meet him. [...]

They lay there like picnickers on the grass, their battle fury spent with their blood.

Antagonists by accident they looked at each other without hatred, with a mild surprise.<sup>120</sup>

Fergusson's use of a Native American doppelgänger also echoes Mary Austin's tactic of appropriating 'Indianness' to explore gendered behaviour: he adopts 'Indianness' in order to play out a battle not between the sexes, but between different kinds of men. As Pilkington asserts, Sam's defeat of Black Wolf emphasizes the need to respond and adapt to changing social conditions, asserting that the 'Indians cling to their primitive nomadic way of life' resulting in their 'near annihilation'.<sup>121</sup> Since this also describes Sam's mountain man way of life, Fergusson adopts a sense of 'Indianness' in order to condone Sam's necessary domestication by his wife: ideas of gendered behaviour are in need of revision too.

Through his elegy for the lone wolf lifestyle of the mountain man, Fergusson presents the possibility of new understandings of gendered behaviour that move into previously delineated

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<sup>119</sup> Fergusson, *Wolf Song*, pp. 161-62.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>121</sup> Pilkington, *Harvey Fergusson*, p. 114.

spheres, but not without misgivings and ambivalence. By the novel's conclusion Sam has been tamed and domesticated: literally brought in from the wilderness to the home. Of the ending Gish has concluded that 'Sam loses but he also gains; for his loss there is compensation, and therein lies the sad/happy ending of the novel'.<sup>122</sup> Fergusson and McCann's decision to commit to each other came fraught with difficulty and was ultimately cut short by her untimely death, providing the writer with a similarly sad/happy ending to his attempt to reformulate marriage in the western art colony.

### **Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos**

Mabel Dodge Luhan's time in Taos and her marriage to Tony Lujan represent the relatively successful culmination of her endeavour to review the ideals of marriage. Like Mary Austin she adopted 'Indianness' as a way to evade the narrow constraints of norms of Anglo-American femininity but, unlike Austin, Luhan refused to repress her sexuality. Like George Sterling asserting the importance of sex, Luhan managed to reformulate the ways conventional marriage is supposed to operate but she did so without Harvey Fergusson's ambivalence. Luhan built an elaborate adobe home in Taos, enjoyed engaging in Native American activities and was partial to wearing Native American blankets. But her most overt adoption of the 'Indian' was in her fourth marriage in 1923. With Tony Lujan she sought to develop a new kind of marriage, particularly a role of wife that acknowledged the free expression of female sexuality. The satisfying solution to these gender concerns is emphasized in her memoirs and the slightly fictionalized version of their marriage presented in the 1935 novel *Winter in Taos*. Both of these sources closely represent her experiences in Taos but both were also carefully constructed for public presentation. As such they tend to depict a more idyllic version of colony life than is found in Luhan's private correspondence and unpublished sections of her memoirs.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Gish, *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson*, p. 186.

<sup>123</sup> Rather than the solitary contentment described in the novel, for instance, Luhan entreated Austin to help her persuade her husband to winter in her former home of Croton-on-Hudson, New York. Letters to her analyst Frances Wickes outline their tumultuous relationship, her fluctuating affections towards him and their numerous 'talking it out and reconciliation moments'. Their marriage also brought new sexual problems, compounding Luhan's attempts to resolve anxieties over her sexuality. Luhan sparked her husband's rage when she became enamoured with Toomer and she contracted syphilis from Tony in 1923. Rudnick reports

Published and unpublished sources equally emphasize, however, that this relationship was the culmination of Luhan's negotiation of the way conventional marriage was supposed to operate and her vision of a kind of femininity that was not restricted to the socially-prescriptive Anglo-American expectations of wife and mother, roles with which she (like Austin) had become disillusioned.

Luhan articulates her dissatisfaction with the predicament of femininity by intentionally disrupting gendered sign systems in her 1924 poem 'The Ballad of Bad Gal'. Presenting androgynous angels, she confronts the arbitrary superficiality of historically-constructed ideas of gender:

I passed the ducky angels all busy with their songs,  
No way to tell the boys from the girls, girls, girls,  
Together they were making the music of the spheres,  
And they all wore dresses and they all wore curls.<sup>124</sup>

Luhan invokes a space in which one can literally rise above Anglo-American sexual ideologies whilst simultaneously aligning less rigid ideas of gender with the divine. The poem invokes the idea that a 'Bad Gal' is one who ventures outside the rigid boundaries of 'proper' feminine behaviour. According to Lois Rudnick, Luhan had always felt 'trapped' in her 'limited and disordering sensuality', unable to dispel her father's staunch prohibition of 'kissing games'.<sup>125</sup> As Luhan's first analyst recorded in his notes, Luhan's father Charles Ganson was 'against sex awfully'.<sup>126</sup> Luhan's childhood, compounded by society's ideas of feminine propriety, led her to see her sexuality as incompatible with the socially-prescribed roles of woman and, particularly, wife. Sex, which Luhan insisted was her 'due', was thus an issue to be confronted: a problem to be solved.<sup>127</sup>

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that Tony Lujan's infidelities included sleeping with his first wife and taking a mistress when he and Luhan spent winters in Carmel in the 1930s. Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos*, p. 117; Rudnick, *The Suppressed Memoirs*, pp. 109-10; Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 122.

<sup>124</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, 'The Ballad of Bad Gal', in *Lorenzo in Taos: D. H. Lawrence and Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Santa Fe: Sunstone, 2007), pp. 95-97 (p. 95).

<sup>125</sup> Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 150.

<sup>126</sup> Rudnick, *The Suppressed Memoirs*, p. 30.

<sup>127</sup> Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 142.

Although some colonists, like Jean Toomer for instance, complained that ‘the spirit of place in Taos seemed to attract matriarchs in greater numbers than made him comfortable’, for writers like Fergusson, drawn to women challenging the restrictions of female gendered behaviour, the presence of colonists like Luhan and Austin made New Mexican art colonies the ideal environment to negotiate gender dynamics.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, in a letter to Leo Stein Luhan describes the numerous gender anxieties being confronted by her male guests:

Andrew Dasburg stayed for four months but his mother complex grew worse and worse until he was a blight and he couldn’t hardly swallow his food at the table. [...] Bobby [theatre designer Robert Edmond Jones] has a family complex and two mother complexes. One is the pathetic, starving-at-the-foot-of-the-cross mother, and the other is the warm-cheerful-bountiful mother. [...] And really when all these mother complexes sat down with me at my table this summer / couldn’t eat a thing – it was so tense!<sup>129</sup>

Although her bias must not be underestimated in such a statement, the propensity of unconventional women like Luhan in New Mexican art colonies did aid the gender experiments played out by many male art-colonists.

Luhan’s attempt to review ideas of femininity in Taos illustrates the claims of a body of criticism outlining the particular appeal of the American southwest to progressive women. Although this chapter has sought to throw light on similarly male interest in and revision of masculine roles, the emphasis on women in the feminist scholarship of the last thirty years highlights the specific attraction of the southwest to women looking to expand notions of traditional femininity. Annette Kolodny, Janice Monk and Vera Norwood, and Barbara Babcock and Nancy Parezo all explore notions of the American southwest as a space for female independence.<sup>130</sup> These explorations of gender politics build on Kolodny’s seminal analysis of an Anglo-American discourse of colonial

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<sup>128</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 33.

<sup>129</sup> Letter Luhan to Leo Stein, [1924?], in Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 199.

<sup>130</sup> Kolodny, *The Land Before Her*; Monk and Norwood, *The Desert is No Lady*; Babcock and Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert*.

expansion premised on an 'initial fantasy of erotic discovery and possession' and exemplified by a male-centred rhetoric of virgin land.<sup>131</sup> As this expansion moved southwest in the nineteenth century, Kolodny asserts in *The Land Before Her*, 'women's public and private documents alike began to claim the new terrain as their own'.<sup>132</sup> The experiences and literature of female art-colonists attest to this pattern of response, exemplified by a contemporary news article about Harvey Fergusson's sister and Santa Fe colonist Erna Fergusson which carried the headline 'Girl Not Daunted by Desert'.<sup>133</sup> Far from daunted, these daughters of the desert view the southwest's topographical and cultural otherness as both intriguing and nurturing. In their survey of female anthropologists at the beginning of the twentieth century, Babcock and Parezo assert that the southwest was a haven for 'restless and rebellious' women providing an 'exotic but safe "laboratory"'.<sup>134</sup> Western art colonies provided a similar 'laboratory' for informal experiments conducted amongst participants. With its accommodation of diverse experiences and limited engagement, the art colony provided a safe space in which social anxieties could be addressed and played out. In this different model of community, men and women could experiment with behaving differently towards each other.

Art colonies are an interesting and underexplored element of this impetus, as colonists like Luhan and Austin utilized the art colony's alternative model of community and the southwest's cultural diversity to play out their anxieties over gendered social roles. Yet, as this chapter has emphasized, this was not a solely female impetus: male art-colonists were utilizing the unique milieu of the art colony for similar experiments with gendered behaviour. Babcock and Parezo's assertion that the southwest has been a 'geography of possibility' and 'a space of light and freedom and energy in which countless scholars, writers, and artists [...] re-inscribed themselves' is actually a gender-neutral statement.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Kolodny, *The Land Before Her*, p. 4.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> Cyrilla P. Lindner, 'Girl Not Daunted by Desert', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 6 June 1926, p. 198, Erna Fergusson Papers, Box 15A.

<sup>134</sup> Babcock and Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert*, p. 7.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



With no published correspondence or writing, Tony Lujan is a particularly challenging figure to place within the story of the Taos art colony.<sup>136</sup> I am acutely aware that relying on information about Tony Lujan provided by Anglo art-colonists replicates the contemporary misrepresentations of Native Americans explored in the previous chapter, but I focus here on Luhan's opinions and experiences partly because of my primary analysis of Anglo-American colonist experiences but also in order to focus on the specific milieu afforded to women interested in negotiating traditional ideas of femininity. To this end I also diverge from previous studies focusing on the ethnic and cultural implications of their marriage. Maureen Reed and Margaret Jacobs have both presented insightful analyses of this marriage and subsequent issues surrounding the social construction of race.<sup>137</sup> Here, however, I restrict my analysis to the social construction of gender, an aspect also raised by Jacobs and Reed in their shared assertion that white women marrying Native American men produced a different reaction to white men marrying Native American women, highlighting 'women's perceived role in maintaining traditions'.<sup>138</sup> As a woman seeking to challenge the traditional roles of women, Luhan's marriage is a fundamental example of female art-colonists engaging with 'Indianness' to expand and negotiate conventional ideas of gendered behaviour.

Like Austin, Luhan saw adopting the visual signifiers of 'Indianness' as the means to accessing a space outside of Anglo-American expectations of femininity. In *The Edge of Taos Desert*, the final instalment of her memoirs, she explains: 'I wanted to be like them [Native Americans] and felt, in some obscure way, that if I looked and acted the way they did, I would be'.<sup>139</sup> It is important to note, however, that Luhan's desire to 'be like them' is different from wanting to *be them*.

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<sup>136</sup> Soon after arriving in Taos Luhan, Sterne and her son John Evans were visiting Taos Pueblo when a local woman invited the group into her home where they found her husband, Tony Lujan, drumming. Luhan invited Tony Lujan to play his drum at her house throughout the following winter and spring, and soon he had become her guide, friend and cultural attaché. They began meeting nightly in a tepee erected in front of her house, yet proclaimed that their relationship was only consummated after her estrangement from Sterne. Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 154.

<sup>137</sup> Maureen E. Reed 'Mixed Messages: Pablita Velarde, Kay Bennett, and the Changing Meaning of Anglo-Indian Intermarriage in Twentieth-Century New Mexico', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 26 (2005), 101-34; Margaret D. Jacobs, 'The Eastmans and the Luhans: Interracial Marriage between White Women and Native American Men, 1875-1935', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 23 (2002), 29-54.

<sup>138</sup> Reed, p. 101.

<sup>139</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 178.

Flannery Burke's interviews with Tony Lujan's family for his biography *From Greenwich Village to Taos* corroborate this view, all of whom assert that Luhan was not 'trying to be Indian'.<sup>140</sup> In her memoirs Luhan goes on to outline the 'several hours a day' spent among Native American women, 'trying to absorb their warmth and ease by imitating their orderly and soft-spoken ways' in a bid to expand her own sense of herself and her role as a woman: 'I knew I could arrive at this unconscious, full equilibrium, but that I could only do so by adapting myself'.<sup>141</sup> Upon her arrival in New Mexico Luhan took immediate steps to adapt and gain the appearance of 'Indianness', instructing her son to chop off her long hair into a bob which closer resembled the local Native American women (figure 2; p. 271). But this visual signifier of 'Indianness' also connotes a distinct sense of modernity, as Luhan's blunt-edged short hair and full fringe also reflected contemporary urban fashion.

Luhan departs from Austin's adoption of 'Indianness' in that she refuses to relinquish her role as a sexual being. As Helen Barolini asserts, Luhan was the symbol of the era's 'sexually emancipated, self-aware New Woman in control of her own destiny'.<sup>142</sup> In an era which began to see sex as 'an avenue of communication rather than simply a means of mutual pleasure' Luhan embraced the writings of both Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis for placing women's sexuality at the vanguard of intellectual discussions.<sup>143</sup>

Luhan had previously attempted to solve this problem by embracing the sexual emancipation expounded by Margaret Sanger, the birth control activist who frequented Luhan's Greenwich Village salon. In her autobiography Luhan explains:

She was the first person I ever knew who was openly an ardent propagandist for the joys of the flesh. [...] Love I had known, and pleasures of the flesh, but usually there had been a certain hidden, forbidden something in my feeling about it and experience of it that made it

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<sup>140</sup> Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos*, p. 127.

<sup>141</sup> Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 152; Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 94.

<sup>142</sup> Helen Barolini, *Their Other Side: Six American Women and the Lure of Italy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), p. 131.

<sup>143</sup> Lois Rudnick, *The Suppressed Memoirs of Mabel Dodge Luhan: Sex, Syphilis, and Psychoanalysis in the Making of Modern American Culture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), p. 14.

seem stolen from life, instead of a means to that great end, the development of life, and the growth of the soul.<sup>144</sup>

Following Sanger's suggestion that she embrace 'sex-expression', Luhan dabbled in experiences of unrestrained sexuality: 'Finally I came to the conclusion that I was very old-fashioned and that what I needed and had never admitted to myself was this very sex-expression other people were so intent upon'.<sup>145</sup> However, having chosen a suitable companion for the experiment, Luhan failed to find satisfaction in the liberated dalliance:

So when within the curtains of my white bed one night I opened my arms to him, I fully expected to melt into the joys of the flesh and the lilies and languors of love. But not at all. I was completely cold to him, completely unresponsive, my blood and nerves not interested. I was disappointed!<sup>146</sup>

This new world of free love held the possibility of an antidote to Luhan's anxieties about female sexuality. Insisting on the 'primacy [...] of the particular sensations associated with sexual excitement' aligns Luhan with her male peers, identifying her as a 'pioneer in the cult of the orgasm' as much as Sterling and London.<sup>147</sup> However, like Fergusson, Luhan failed to find unmitigated enjoyment in casual sexual liaisons. She does concede that Sanger's philosophy helped her 'get rid of some old, old, prohibitions, and to raise the curse a bit' but these progressive experiences were ultimately unsatisfying.<sup>148</sup> Luhan rejects such casual dalliances in a statement echoing Austin's remarks about male Carmel colonists:

[They] try to hide themselves in others, and, in relationships based on sensation, never feeling *real* except when lost and oblivious in some 'love affair'; or else in drink or drugs, trying to find the stimulation that doesn't arise naturally in one's own depths.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Luhan, *Movers and Shakers*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>147</sup> Christopher Lasch, 'Mabel Dodge Luhan: Sex as Politics', in *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 118.

<sup>148</sup> Luhan, *Movers and Shakers*, p. 71.

<sup>149</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, pp. 276-77.

Denouncing the exaggerations of 'sensation' sought by Sterling and London, Luhan declares not to be fulfilled by casual 'love affairs', seeking instead an unconventional sense of femininity which accommodates female sexuality within marriage. Indeed, an unpublished section of *Movers and Shakers*, the volume of her memoirs detailing her experiences with 'sex-expression', includes an essay in which a sociology professor provides instructions for married men on female sexual arousal.<sup>150</sup>

For Luhan, a negotiation of sexual encounters was insufficient: she sought a re-evaluation of male-female relationships. In New York nothing had changed except her sexual experiences; sex was isolated as a point of departure from conventional femininity. Taos, conversely, offered an opportunity to dismantle and rebuild the idea of marriage completely and develop a new vision of the role of wife which reformulated the relationship between sex and love. By removing herself from the prescriptive social expectations of Anglo-American gendered behaviour and adopting a sense of 'Indianness' through her interracial marriage, Luhan succeeded in being a more fulfilling kind of wife. Luhan comments on this distinction later in her memoirs when she declares that 'Here in Taos I was awake to a new experience of sex and love, more mature and more civilized than any I had known before'.<sup>151</sup> Luhan's semantics are revealing. Associating conventional feminine constraint with her childhood, Luhan seeks a type of sensuality that is more 'mature'. Similarly, the experiences of 'sex-expression' which left her cold are deemed 'uncivilized' because they concerned the 'selection of a lover that is the mate, if only for an hour'.<sup>152</sup> Luhan did not want to reject the practices of marriage, but wanted to reform them. In her marriage to Tony Lujan she found a sense of femininity and a male-female relationship that was both 'more mature and more civilized'. On the cusp of her fourth marriage Luhan declared to Alice Corbin that she and Tony 'have to make a new form of life now. [...] Our life has to be re-symbolized. A new symbol must be chosen – to have more *living*'.<sup>153</sup> Invoking

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<sup>150</sup> Rudnick, *The Suppressed Memoirs*, p. 15.

<sup>151</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 272.

<sup>152</sup> Luhan, *Movers and Shakers*, p. 71.

<sup>153</sup> Rudnick, *The Suppressed Memoirs*, p. 103.

this visual rhetoric emphasizes Luhan's rejection of the sign system of Anglo-American femininity, reinforced by the distinctly visual element of her transformative union:

Tony was working upon me continually and his influence upon me apparently came from the way he saw me, how he looked at me. [...] As he saw me so I was slowly becoming; he saw me into being.<sup>154</sup>

Tony Lujan's non-Anglo perspective removed Luhan from her established gendered sign system and ultimately helped her adopt a different kind of femininity.

Emphasis on the importance of visual signifiers is reinforced by fellow art-colonists' attestations that Luhan relished the performative. Recalling his Taos hostess in his autobiography, for instance, Ansel Adams declares that Luhan 'played out her life on a stage'.<sup>155</sup> Of course, a marriage is not performative in the same way as the mimesis of 'Indian' practices. Yet the couple accommodated a plethora of artists and writers in Los Gallos: as hosts they were particularly on display. *Winter in Taos* reinforces this sense of a marriage on display, with names and details remaining unchanged despite its ostensibly fictive genre. The narrative occurs on a single winter's day in Taos but incorporates myriad reflections and impressions of the Taos landscape and Luhan's life within it. The marriage between Mabel and Tony (names unchanged) takes centre stage for many of these meditations, while the presence of other art-colonists is also outlined in accurate detail.<sup>156</sup> Diverging only slightly from her flair for autobiographical writing, *Winter in Taos*' thinly-veiled account allowed Luhan to depict the fulfilment she had found in her life in New Mexico, a life which she believed to be the product of 'Purpose & Plan – where one has been used deliberately –

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<sup>154</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 321.

<sup>155</sup> Adams, *Autobiography*, p. 91.

<sup>156</sup> An exhaustive description of Johnson's house, for instance, portrays his Taos home in intricate detail: 'Spud's house stands just beyond and to the right of the bridge. The creek curves around his yard, and big trees border it. [...] The "back room" in Spud's house is Rembrandtesque: all brown and black and white. [...] A few numbers of past "Laughing Horses" that were born in this room, rest on shelves in their assorted colors. [...] Everyone sends Spud horses; horses of ivory and wood and straw, pottery horses, metal horses, laughing horses, or horses fierce and prancing, grotesque and exquisite. [...] Spud collects books like he collects horses [...] and there they are, all over his three rooms. He never buys horses – they come to him – but for books he makes sacrifices'. Luhan, *Winter in Taos*, pp. 73-78.

pushed here & there – & put up against things – out of which order & strength & beauty have been forged'.<sup>157</sup> These adjectives would come to categorize Luhan's marriage to Tony Lujan and became the lasting public image of the pair. This is visually surmised, perhaps inadvertently, in Rudnick's biography of Luhan *New Woman, New Worlds* in which photographs of the pair sit side by side on a page, identical in size and shape (figure 3; p. 271). Below them, the rest of the page remains blank. The pictures would have easily fit on the page vertically but instead they are arranged horizontally, the appearance of a diptych created by the symmetry of the sitters' positioning, turned, as they are, towards each other. Yet this composition has another effect, too. Both pictures feature a bright pale background in the upper part of the picture growing progressively darker towards the bottom of the frame. A slick of black hair meets the matching stripes of the sitters' wraps, the pattern of which even travel in the same direction. They are at once companions and reflections: connected yet discrete.<sup>158</sup>

Luhan's Taos home was, in many ways, the embodiment of her vision of a new model of domesticity. She purchased the land for Los Gallos in June 1918, at her future husband's suggestion. As the house grew, he oversaw exterior construction while she made decisions about interior décor: Anglo- and Native American aspects of the house becoming connected but discrete. Indeed, the intricate design of the ceilings in Los Gallos captures the geometric pattern of the Native American shawls adorned in the couple's coordinated portraits. The house is thus draped in 'Indianness', like Luhan often was, and afforded Luhan the shelter she so envied of the Native Americans in their blankets: 'The Indian women were sheltered in their shawls, seeming so comfortable and encompassed within them. [...] I longed for the insulation of the shawl and wore mine whenever I could'.<sup>159</sup> Construction choices subsequently highlight the requirements for Luhan's personal fulfilment, a correlation elucidated in *Winter in Taos* as 'the never-ending "fixing" one has to do in

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<sup>157</sup> Luhan, 'Journal Intime', in *The Suppressed Memoirs*, p. 103.

<sup>158</sup> This composition later adorned the reprint of *The Edge of Taos Desert* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987) and is currently used in promotional literature about the Mabel Dodge Luhan House, cementing the pair's lasting public image.

<sup>159</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 179.

the house and garden, as well as in oneself, to keep order and harmony'.<sup>160</sup> Having 'tried on' a Florentine villa and Greenwich Village *pied a terre*, Los Gallos became the physical manifestation of the revised male-female relationship she achieved with Tony Lujan. It presented a balance of male and female influences, both Anglo- and Native American:

So before we ever knew each other in the ultimate outward relationship, Tony and I had grown together inwardly, and in our daily companionship we had already accomplished a union of our utterly opposite characteristics.<sup>161</sup>

As such, the house is depicted in *Winter in Taos* as the combination of them both, an equilibrium of opposites, and one in which 'the house is less alive, and things look less significant when he is gone. But he says the same thing happens when I am not there'.<sup>162</sup> *Winter in Taos* presents an idyll that reiterates Luhan's actual performance.

Los Gallos thus became a monument to an evolved relationship between genders while *Winter in Taos* rendered it in literary imagination: both emphasized a male-female relationship which accommodated and even thrived on difference. In an unpublished section of her memoirs, for instance, Luhan explains:

When I lived with Tony, it was more like being on a visit in a strange country, but when I married him, I became naturalized, one with him and his, accepting the good and bad of it, and above all, the *different*, and making it mine.<sup>163</sup>

Luhan had finally managed to play out a version of 'wife' that was on her own terms. This is encapsulated at the end of *The Edge of Taos Desert* when Tony Lujan, through Luhan's vernacular narration, asserts that he is 'always goin' to do things because that help you, make you happy, make you feel life good. You goin' to do the way I want because you want to make the life good'.<sup>164</sup> The emphasis on actions and conduct towards each other suggest that the strength of their relationship

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<sup>160</sup> Luhan, *Winter in Taos*, p. 50.

<sup>161</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 296.

<sup>162</sup> Luhan, *Winter in Taos*, p. 71.

<sup>163</sup> Luhan, 'Family Affairs', in *The Suppressed Memoirs*, p. 104 (my emphasis).

<sup>164</sup> Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert*, p. 332.

lies in their differences rather than their similarities. Distinctions between them are supported by their behavioural choices, creating a new dynamic which accommodates and even thrives on heterogeneity, much like the colony milieu in which they, and the other figures discussed in this chapter, resided.

Jack London, George Sterling, Mary Austin, Harvey Fergusson and Mabel Dodge Luhan were all engaging with the practices of marriage on their own terms. Attempts to manage autonomy and connectedness, outlined in previous chapters, are also exhibited with relation to the relationships between men and women. These colonists improvised the types and levels of intimacy that they found most satisfying, utilizing a sense of looseness which characterizes the colony as a ludic place. They were utilizing the art colony's atmosphere of improvisation to play with ideas of the kinds of men and women they wanted to be. The fact, however, that most remained married is central to understandings of the colony from this perspective: many colonists did not wish to be completely detached from a spouse, but sought a more satisfying version of this type of connectedness. This was a safe space, a space understood by colonists as outside of conventional expectations about men and women's behaviour. Be it dominant but monogamous men or passive femininity, these colonists attempted to rethink gender politics and negotiate power relations between the sexes. Sterling and London experimented with the idea of the hypermasculine man as ideal husband, with varying levels of success, while Austin rejected restrictive Anglo-American femininity by embracing 'Indianness'. Fergusson's ambivalence about balanced power relations reveal a desire for revised gender roles for both men and women, while Tony Lujan was central to Luhan's revised version of marriage. The physical demonstration of gender at the art colonies was exhibited through traditionally 'manly' activities and a mimesis of 'Indian' activities. Both were visual signifiers of heightened sensations: behaviours which perform certain kinds of masculinity or femininity and which elicited intense emotional responses for these colonists. With varying levels of success, they

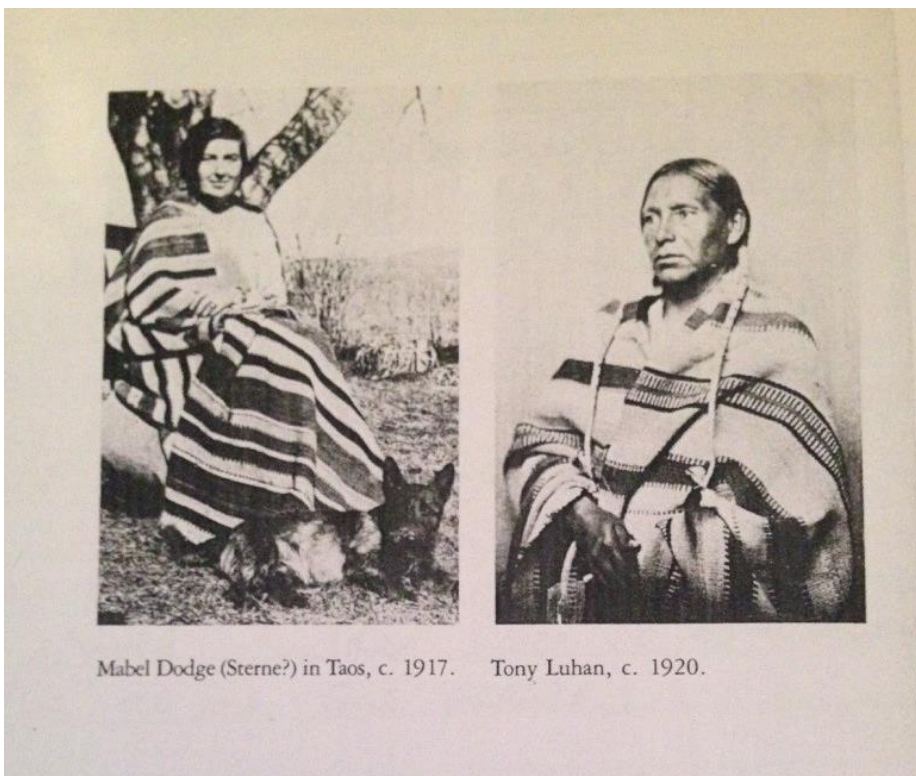


played out potential revisions of the ideals of marriage through their experiences and their imaginative work.

**Figure 2:** Mabel Dodge Luhan with Native American bob hairstyle



**Figure 3:** Mabel Dodge and Tony Lujan in Lois Rudnick's *New Woman, New Worlds*



## Conclusion

My investigations in this thesis have highlighted the presence of a kind of art colony in the American west that accommodated artistic improvisation, diverse movements, formally innovative but problematic intercultural encounters and negotiation of social anxieties. What Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos have in common, and what simultaneously distinguishes them from other artistic groups, is the way in which aspects of connectedness – to peers, other cultures, a spouse – share a foundation in a desire to manage amounts and kinds of interactions in order to find a balance which constitutes the most satisfying way to live and the most successful way to produce art.

By linking art and place, my interdisciplinary methodology has extended the reach of existing cultural histories, particularly those that focus on the American west and southwest.<sup>1</sup> Exploring the distinctiveness of this type of group and the unique ways in which participants confronted and explored anxieties about the time and place in which they lived, my synthesis of different areas of criticism makes an important contribution to the field of cultural history. Through the course of these discussions I have unpicked the intricacies of how this kind of group worked through an engagement with a range of critical understandings of the relationships between people, while extending a focus on the appeal of the western art colony's distance from the artistic marketplace.<sup>2</sup> Artists were afforded the space and remoteness to explore what art could be in a region with a longstanding tradition of romantic otherness. The feeling of separation from the art market was heightened by artists' and writers' sense of regional specificity in places where they could feel like 'expatriate[s] without leaving the country'.<sup>3</sup> Interest in non-Anglo cultures as a usable American past, hostility to modernity and a sense of detachment from urban American culture are all central to colonist experiences in both California and New Mexico, and shape the interpersonal dynamics and artistic agendas of the colony milieu. These regions also offered colonists a year-round

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<sup>1</sup> Notably Padget, *Indian Country*, Dilworth, *Imagining Indians* and Goodman, *Translating Southwestern Landscapes*.

<sup>2</sup> Such as Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* and Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures'.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Dispenza and Louise Turner, *Will Shuster: A Santa Fe Legend* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1989), p. 12.

temperate climate, with George Sterling quickly commending that 'in Carmel [...] the air is always mild' and a contemporary advertisement estimating 'that there are over 300 sunshiny days in the Taos Valley'.<sup>4</sup> Elements of both regions' geographic context – elements of the landscape and climate as well as Native American and Hispanic cultural populations – provided colonists with 'direct contrasts to qualities in the dominant American culture which they found disturbing'.<sup>5</sup>

This specific form of settlement flourished in places which offered an absolute difference from American urban centres. Their complex territorial history and the presence of indigenous peoples suggested an exoticism which was simultaneously inherently American. Locations incorporating both aspects of this dichotomy lent themselves to a form of artistic group seeking to rethink and review entrenched ideas about community, culture and gender. I have shown how travelling to these places was a distinct aspect of their appeal and influenced art-colonists' experiences of western art colonies, taking advantage of its relative inaccessibility and distance from American urban centres. In this way the western art colony utilized a space associated with, and in many ways defined by, multiplicity and hybridity. It was the most appropriate of settings for a form of settlement which accommodated ideas of negotiation and adaptation. There was no rejection of mainstream culture or institutions here, just an attempt to revise them in colonists' search for more satisfying ways to live and to produce art. Western art colonies provided a space to do things differently. The scene was set to break down old ideas and begin to create new ones, not just politically and culturally, but aesthetically too. The Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos art colonies provided an artistically-dynamic atmosphere driven by opportunities to negotiate ideas of community, culture and marriage and a stage to play around with the altered patterns of behaviour with which art-colonists were engaging.

Although artists and writers in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos sought more intellectually satisfying ways to live, as well as more stimulating ways to produce art, the project of the western

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<sup>4</sup> Walker, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, p. 14; advertisement in *New Mexican Review*, 12 April 1900, quoted in Weigle and Fiore, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Reeve, *Santa Fe and Taos*, p. 8.

art colony was not socially reformist; art-colonists' review and revision of patterns of behaviour was purely in pursuit of personal development. They were innovative in their wish to create an environment conducive to producing art individually whilst affording experiences not available in the city, but there was no indication that this was borne of radical impulses: this was for the benefit of those people that came, not as a model for society.<sup>6</sup> The project of the art colony is thus well articulated by Mabel Dodge Luhan's biographer Lois Rudnick as an opportunity for art-colonists to 'reconstruct their vision of themselves' since attempts to find more satisfying ways to live were highly personal and idiosyncratic.<sup>7</sup> The desire for a more fulfilling community was concerned with their own development rather than an attempt to better organize society.

Colonies in the American west are linked by shared patterns of behaviour as well as the network of connections forged by art-colonists moving between these art colonies. Art-colonists exhibited a similar desire for therapeutic escape, reflecting contemporary antimodernist and primitivist sentiments but in distinct ways and with distinct aims. Opportunities for sociability and aesthetic reinvigoration are shared ideas that can be traced through all three colonies, and which combine with common reactions to contemporary concerns to distinguish Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as a specific type of artistic group. Many participants asserted their intentions of artistic reinvention or, at least, enhanced productivity. Mary Austin declared her Santa Fe house 'a home built for work' while Witter Bynner declared his artistic sensibilities 'washed clean' in Santa Fe.<sup>8</sup> Yet Bynner also hosted infamously bacchanalian parties, prompting fellow colonist Harvey Fergusson to characterize the colony as a 'social orgy' at times.<sup>9</sup> In Carmel, Arnold Genthe developed ground-breaking colour photography in the specially-designed darkroom in his Carmel home, marking him out as what journalist Willard Huntingdon Wright classed the 'Eminently Respectables' of the Carmel colony: a

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<sup>6</sup> Charles J. Rooney, *Dreams and Visions: A Study of American Utopias, 1865-1917* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Stineman, *Mary Austin*, p. 153; Rudnick, *New Woman, New Worlds*, p. 243.

<sup>9</sup> Diary, 6 September 1924, Harvey Fergusson Papers, Carton 1.

group who worked hard and went to bed early.<sup>10</sup> The alternative group described by Wright are the apparently less distinguished 'Respectables' who were keen on drinking and singing when they were not working (which was much of the time).<sup>11</sup> These two aspects of the colony milieu, reinvigoration and socializing, often converged in the organization of groups and associations, highlighting how the appeal of western art colonies lay in a combination of work and play. Colonist homes attest to these shared themes, accommodating ever-changing groups of guests and utilizing local geography and culture so that art-colonists could feel 'connected' to the land, to other colonists, and to the regions' residual populations.

Western art-colonists were a particularly diverse group in terms of nationality, personality and occupation, and I have navigated questions of definition which are compounded by their varying engagements with the art colony milieu. The existing field of scholarship asserts that this diversity of art-colonists' movements and engagements lends itself to the common supposition that these places merely hosted a range of dissociated, independent individuals when, I have argued, these artists actually sought a particular sense of group identity, belonging and affiliation. The multiplicity of artists and experiences in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos does not negate theorization but requires interpretation through the lens of analytical frameworks formulated in this thesis: acknowledging diversity to identify the presence of a community affording both movement and a sense of belonging, a sense of partial connectedness to other cultures and a space to confront social anxieties.

I have extracted those figures definable as art-colonists in western art colonies from the melange of transnational visitors who are outlined by critics of Anglo-American visitors to the southwest. Since engagements with this place were extremely eclectic, only by focusing on the style of interaction with other art-colonists and with the colony locale can any real understanding develop about this form of settlement. Focusing on artists and writers who are art-colonists according to the

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<sup>10</sup> Willard Huntington Wright, 'Hotbed of Soulful Culture, Vortex of Erotic Erudition', *Los Angeles Times*, 22 May 1910.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

definition I have put forth in this thesis emphasizes my assertion of congruity between the art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos. Questions of definition have been resolved less by who these individuals were and more by what brought them to western art colonies, what experiences they had therein, and how this subsequently affected the art they produced. Connections forged between colonists associated with the art colonies of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos attest to my central argument that they constitute a specific form of artistic environment. Aspects of these shared patterns of behaviour were explored in the chapters of this thesis, building on Chapter One's establishment of the discussion on these three vibrant artistic milieux, focusing on how this specific form of settlement built on earlier models of the art colony and a prior rhetoric of 'enchantment' in the west and southwest.

Chapter Two highlighted how artists and writers endured and even enjoyed their encumbered trips to, from and around these regions. The familiar colony pattern of continuous, diverse movements can be seen in the ever-changing guests at Luhan's, Bynner's or Alice Corbin's adobe houses: their homes formed a meeting place for transient art-colonists. At the same, groups formed somewhat organically by colonists whose paths happened to cross in these places and who found affiliation through shared interests; evidenced by the development of *The Rabble and Writers' Editions* in Santa Fe. In distinct ways, both Austin's and D. H. Lawrence's experiences of the New Mexican art colonies exemplify the common colony tension between movement and settlement.

The examples explored in Chapter Three emphasized a shared practice amongst art-colonists in New Mexico; namely, a distinct way of engaging with regional Native and Hispanic Americans. Artists and writers residing at the Santa Fe and Taos colonies were afforded opportunities for proximity and contact with these 'other' cultures as well as opportunities to manage and control these interactions through the colony's sense of unconstrained movement. For Anglo colonists, this contact zone of diverse cultures manifested in a tension between immersion and separation. Many took the opportunity to penetrate and communicate cultural difference to Anglo America through artistic endeavours that they undertook with some sensitivity and extensive research. And yet their

tactics served ultimately to appropriate and mythologize other cultures. Although these artists and writers felt that they were perceptively exploring other ways of life, they were in fact conducting an imagined dialogue with Native American and Hispanic peoples in the west. My discussion of works by Oliver La Farge, Willa Cather and Ansel Adams exemplified the problems of western colony-produced art as well as its achievements. The space afforded artists to improvise and the presence of intriguingly different cultural subject matter often resulted in aesthetically innovative but paternalistic depictions of cultural difference.

Chapter Four consolidated these explorations of managed connectedness by exploring how the improvisational quality of the western art colony environment provided both male and female colonists with a space to confront and negotiate socially-entrenched expectations of how men and women should behave. Overtly performative displays of gender roles, employing visual signifiers like costume and gesture, reinforce how the domain of the art colony allowed male and female art-colonists to similarly pursue experiments with gendered behaviour and the possibility to review male-female relationships. Many art-colonists ascribed to Jean Toomer's proclamation that Taos offered 'the possibility of a new people. Men and women in spirit to match the grandeur of this earth'.<sup>12</sup> Art-colonists in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos were looking to be new kinds of men and women which could accommodate but reform concepts like marriage.

The art colonies in Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos formed at the intersection of artists' individual movements, offering a network of temporary association which afforded a sense of affiliation without impeding diverse movement. Here art-colonists could interact with indigenous cultures and experiment with forging new American aesthetics. Removed from the established routines and expectations of urban American culture, they could confront its inadequacies and attempt to develop more satisfying male-female relationships. In all these ways artists and writers in western art colonies exhibited the patterns of behaviour that I have identified throughout this thesis and reinforce my assertion that together they constitute a specific form of settlement.

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<sup>12</sup> Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*, p. 29.



Throughout this study I have highlighted how participants connected to other artists, the colony locale, other cultures and to their spouses. The impact and influence of these interactions on colony-produced art is interesting and illuminating. By highlighting these complex patterns of behaviour I have augmented academic understanding of how and why people band together in groups. Further, the elucidation of specific patterns of behaviour and my definition of Carmel, Santa Fe and Taos as a specific kind of art colony invites more rigorous exploration of how artistic groups work and suggests the need for a re-evaluation of twentieth-century artistic groups in light of my observations in this thesis.

Definition of these places as a specific form of settlement, as a particular kind of art colony, extends our understanding of collaborative artistic endeavour and the appeal of different types of artistic group. My discussion has asked and answered the question of what people gain from being part of a group and how it affects artistic production. This gives us an insight into the workings of these groups and illuminates their appeal for artists at the beginning of the twentieth century. It shows us that group formations are intricate and detailed, but that grappling with this intricacy is extremely rewarding. Using new interpretative frameworks I have recovered these art colonies as important sites of aesthetic and cultural activity, explorations which extend our understanding of both American art history and cultural history.

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